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DISCOVERY AND EXPLORATION OF AUSTRALIA.

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Ludwig Leichhardt

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A HISTORY

OF THE

DISCOVERY AND EXPLORATION

OF

AUSTRALIA;

OR,

AN ACCOUNT OF THE PROGRESS OF GEOGRAPHICAL DISCOVERY IN THAT CONTINENT, FROM THE EARLIEST PERIOD TO THE PRESENT DAY.

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ac.

BY THE

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AUTHOR OF "GEOLOGICAL OBSERVATIONS IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA," "NORTH AUSTRALIA," "NOT QUITE SO OLD AS THE HILLS," ETC., ETC.

IN TWO VOLUMES.—VOL. I.

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1865.

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DEDICATION.

TO

HIS EXCELLENCY SIR HENRY BARKLY, K.C.B., F.R.S.,

Governor of the Mauritius.
Late Governor-in-Chief of the Colony of Victoria,
President of the Royal Society, Victoria,
&c., &c., &c.

My Dear Sir Henry,—

In reading these volumes you will see that, during the term of your government in Victoria, more has been done for exploration in Australia than during the previous twenty years. You will remark, also, that the last and most gigantic efforts have been made under the auspices of the Royal Society, of which you were so long the President. Were it for this alone, your name should justly stand at the head of a better History than mine. But on me you have a particular claim. Throughout the whole of my researches you have constantly rendered me valuable and ready assistance. In paying a just tribute, therefore, to your zeal in the cause of Australian exploration, let me add my own grateful acknowledgments by dedicating these volumes to you.

Very faithfully yours,

Julian E. Tenison Woods.

PREFACE.

I NEED trouble my readers with but a very few words in explanation of the object for which this history has been written. My greatest difficulty has been to give a good view of the geographical features of the colony, and while recording the manner in which they have been explored, to try to avoid tiresome repetition. In treating of so uniform a country as Australia, this has been no easy task. My first intention was to do no more than compile all the most important discoveries, and to let each explorer speak for himself. This would have made a very accurate, but a most unreadable book. The later explorations, especially, are recorded with a minuteness tedious beyond all conception. Those who have not tried to wade through them can form no idea how such important and interesting journeys have been made dry and repulsive by minuteness of detail. This, of course, is valuable enough to a settler, but must close everything but the results to the general public. My endeavour has been to give a clear and condensed narrative, with

such descriptions and illustrations as I could gather from other sources. If I have succeeded, I believe that my labours will be found valuable as well as interesting beyond the limits of Australia. Certain observations and conclusions which occur from time to time I should wish to make no one responsible for but myself. Readers will easily perceive which they are, and they are left upon their own merits.

If alone for the sake of apologizing for the execution of its pages, I might wish to explain the difficult circumstances under which the work has been written; but I have no desire to obtrude purely personal matters upon the public. I would not, however, wish my readers to think that the collection of the necessary materials for these volumes has been without trouble, or that much labour and difficulty has not been experienced in obtaining useful details. Were I to do so, I should underrate labours not my own. I have been living in the Australian bush while writing the work, and have been obliged entirely to rely on the exertions of others to get every paper which I wanted. To the untiring, disinterested labours of a few friends, therefore, I owe everything. Need I say how glad I am to have an opportunity of acknowledging my obligations; and I only wish the public could know how great they are! I have spoken of one in the dedication of the preceding page. For the rest, let me express my earnest thanks, first, to Sir D. Daly, Governor of South Australia; secondly, to Mr. Alexander Burkitt, late of the Williamstown Obser-

vatory, not only for the maps and sketches which illustrate the following pages, but also for a really terrible amount of copying, and a zeal for the success of the whole work, to which I can scarcely do justice here. To the Hon. G. M. Waterhouse; my brother, Mr. J. D. Woods; and Mr. J. Howard Clark, of Adelaide, I owe the next debt of thanks, since, without the assistance they have rendered the volumes would not perhaps have been written. Finally, to Mr. Tulk, Curator of the Melbourne Public Library; Rev. W. H. Clarke, F.G.S., &c., of Sydney; Major Warburton; B. H. Babbage, Esq., of Adelaide; Lieut. J. S. Roe, Surveyor-General, Western Australia; and S. P. Winter, Esq., Murndale, Wannon River, Victoria, for valuable assistance during the course of my literary labours.

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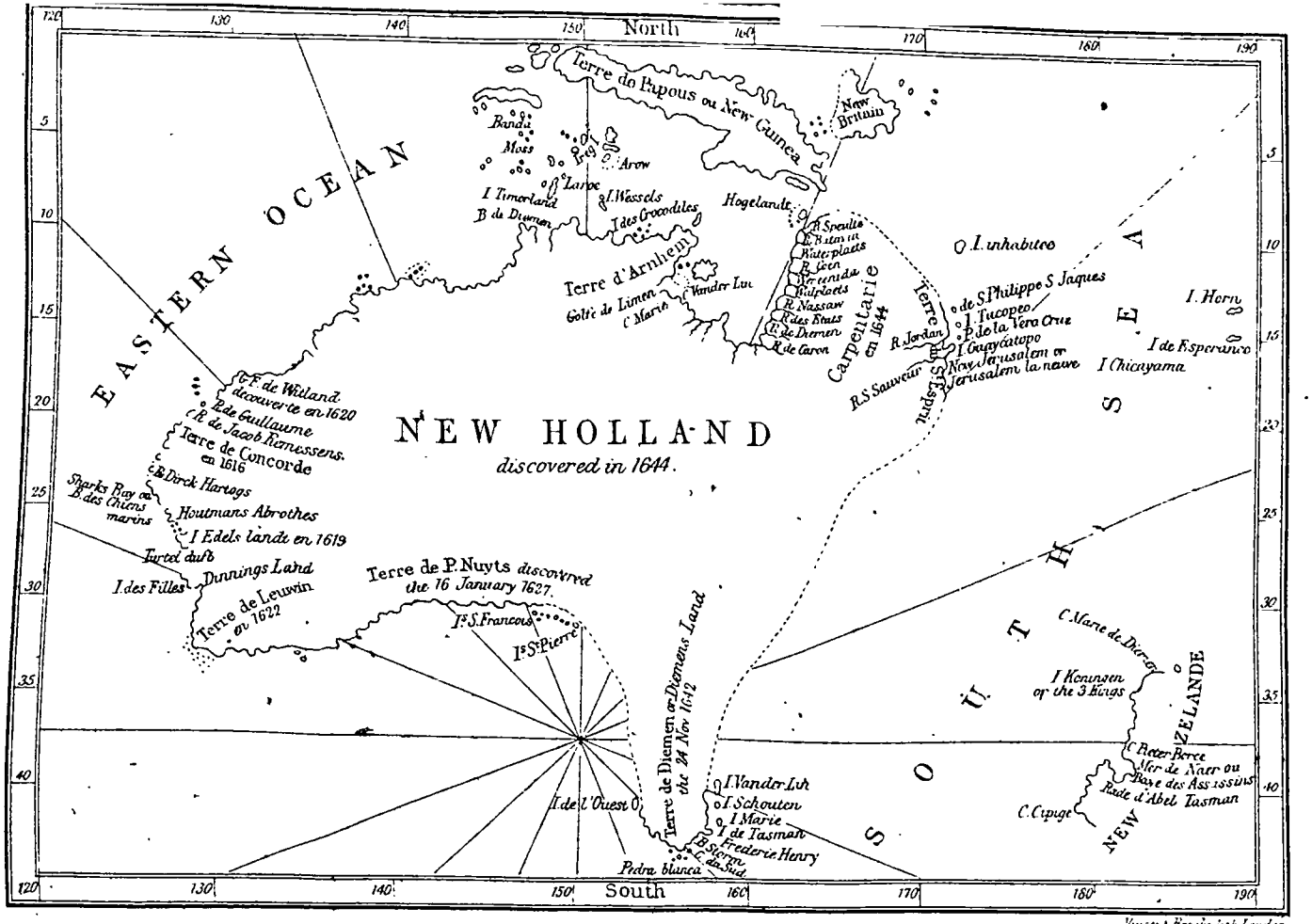

(to face Chap 1st History of Exploration in Australia.)

REDUCED CHART OF AUSTRALIA BY VANGONDY

DISCOVERY AND EXPLORATION OF AUSTRALIA.

CHAPTER I.

EARLY VOYAGES.

Various claims to first discovery—Early voyages of the Portuguese—Discovery of Australia before the year 1540—Manoel Godina de Heredia in 1601—The Dutch explorers—The *Duyphen* in 1606—Torres later in the same year—Early Dutch voyages—Dirk Hartog in 1616—Houtman's Abrolhos—Prévost's errors—Edels in 1619—The *Leuwin* in 1622—The *Pera* and *Arnhem* in 1623—Nuyts in 1627—De Witt and Pelsart in 1628—Pool, 1636—Tasman, 1642—The *Vergulde Draeck* in 1656—Dampier in 1688—Vlamingh in 1696—Dampier again—Other Dutch navigators.

WHAT we designate the continent of Australia has not always been known by so euphonious and appropriate a name. To our forefathers of the last century it was spoken of as New Holland. Before that, the Dutch called it Terra Australis. The Spaniards had had a share in its nomenclature previously, and had called it Terra Australis del Espiritu Sancto; and in the earliest known maps it has the name of Jave la Grande. It was Captain Flinders who settled its present appellation; and certainly this is not the least debt the country owes him. The name is well known enough in the present day; for the land which bears it has already had a large influence in the destinies of the world, and its future greatness is already dimly foreseen. It has even been called the empire of the antipodes. This, however, is an exaggeration. Having in all its wide extent a population of little more than a

third that of London, it is premature to call it an empire, or to look upon it, with all its rapid progress, as more than a promising colony, which administers its own laws now, and may by-and-by be able to protect itself. No one, however, can doubt that the continent is large and of immense importance in the geography of the world; and yet, great as it is, its discoverer is unknown, and the date of the discovery only guessed at. There are two reasons to be assigned for this. The early voyages to the continent were made by the Portuguese and Dutch. What the Spanish did was very little, and they carefully concealed it. What the Portuguese did has unaccountably become lost. It seems that the latter were most jealous of their discoveries, probably lest other nations should monopolize them; and it is asserted that the punishment of death was threatened against any one who should export certain charts from the kingdom. No wonder, then, that we can get no record from them. But with the Dutch the case is different. It used to be asserted that they most selfishly kept their geographical knowledge to themselves; but it appears that this is untrue. Many geographical works were published, under the direction of the Dutch East India Company, in the commencement of the 17th century, and any new voyage of interest was freely made public.

Discoveries of smaller importance were not made known, probably for the same reasons that some stupid books are not published now. They would not sell. The most enthusiastic admirer of Australia must admit that all of the coast which the Dutch were likely to have seen—namely, from Sharks' Bay round to Cape Leveque—would not form a theme for any lively description. The shore is almost an uninterrupted succession of low, barren sand-hills, destitute of grass and water, without any higher land appearing over them. Neither were the natives particularly interesting. They were naked and extremely shy; so that if a Dutchman did succeed in labouring over the sand-hills to get a nearer view of the savages, he only got some of their rude implements of warfare, and these

were thrown at him. No wonder, then, that such voyages were not published. Many of them still remain buried in the archives of the East India Company, or contained in that huge mausoleum of papers which that once famous institution has left at the Hague as a monument to its memory. It will likewise want great explorers and energetic men to draw thence the record of voyages so long lost, of which it may be said, as of the Herculanean papyri:—

> Sed quam non motus terræ valuere nec ignes,
> Perdere, scriptoris pagina dira valet:
> En iterum tetris miserè tot mersa ruinis,
> Boyardi in libro tota sepulta jacet.

But sometimes Dutch captains made the discovery of Australia in a most unpleasant manner, by finding it under the ship's keel when they least expected it. In this case, the shipwreck which ensued was always of sufficient interest to secure publication, and thus we have the record of some voyages which would otherwise have been lost. They will appear as this work proceeds. Having, therefore, given some of the causes of the uncertainty on the subject, the earliest known records are submitted to the reader.

Some suspicion of a southern land would seem to have existed among the ancients, from remarkable passages in the writings of Seneca, Theopompus, and Manilius. The first merely speaks of later days when Oceanus shall relax the bonds of the universe, and a new earth and new orbs shall be discovered. Theopompus relates a conversation between a demi-god and a mortal, the former of whom speaks of lands existing outside the ocean which circumscribes Europe, Asia, and Libya, where men are twice our stature, and there are big animals and mighty beasts. Manilius distinctly speaks of a habitable part of the southern hemisphere, which part, he says, lies under our feet. What makes this quotation more remarkable is, that in it he is speaking of the spherical form of the earth.*

* For the most of the facts and quotations in this chapter I am indebted to Mr. Major's admirable and learned work, "Early Voyages to Terra Australis," published by the Hakluyt Society.

But I apprehend that no one will regard these passages as more than happy guesses, or the mere legends of poetry. It might be interesting to speculate how it would be possible for the truth of Australia's existence to percolate from the savages of one nation to another, but more than speculation it could never be. It is useless, therefore, to pursue it further. Neither need we mention other Greek and Latin authors from whom such legends have arisen.

A claim is made on behalf of the Chinese for the discovery of the Australian continent at a very remote period. Marco Polo gives a description of some large island lying to the south-east of Java, the particulars of which, it is presumed, he learned in the Celestial Empire. Mr. Marsden, the translator of Marco Polo, and after him Mr. Major, have shown that the countries referred to were islands in the Indian archipelago.

The next claim is as easily disposed of. It is made on behalf of Binot Paulmier de Gonneville, who sailed from Honfleur in 1503, on a voyage to the South Seas. It appears that he rounded the Cape of Good Hope in safety, and was then overtaken by a storm, which caused him to lose all knowledge of where he was. When a calm returned, he steered southward. This course brought him to a land where he remained six months, and then returned to France, bringing with him one of the inhabitants. The ship was plundered by an English corsair on its return, so that the journals were lost; but a declaration was made by De Gonneville and his officers as to the facts of their voyage, and sent to the Admiralty of France. Many years after, the great-grandson of the native brought to Europe on this voyage, petitioned the Pope to be allowed to form an expedition for the conversion of the natives of the country of his ancestors.

The account of the voyage, printed with the petition, is the only narrative on the subject now extant. Many have supposed that the country thus visited was Australia; but this view is quite untenable, for a simple reason: De Gonneville describes the inhabitants of his new country as being already far advanced in civiliza-

tion; and this could in no degree apply to any portion of Australia.

There is one more claim to be disposed of before coming to the real discoveries of the continent. It is made on behalf of Magalhaens as one of the results of his celebrated voyage round the world, made in 1520, in the ship *Vittoria*. The assertion was made in 1855 by Aldama Ayula, of Madrid, and he pointed for a confirmation of his views to a magnificently illuminated map, made in 1570 by Vaz Domado, and formerly preserved in the Carthusian monastery of Evora. At the request of Mr. Major, Dr. John Martin has recently examined that map. He states that it contains no land laid down to the south of New Guinea; but that, separated from the rest of the chart by the bordering scale of parallels of latitude, there is a line of coast running from west to east, with a little southing. Supposing that the whole sheet were meant to constitute one map, this could not be Australia, for it lies north-east of New Guinea; neither is there any land known which would at all correspond to it in that position, especially with such large rivers as the chart represents it to have. It is supposed, therefore, to be a marginal map of the coast of the Magellan Straits, and some of the names correspond with that locality. Subsequent chartographers mistook it for a chart of the north coast of New Guinea, and hence, in all subsequent maps, the latter island has upon its north side all the names of Magalhaens' chart.*

For a long time the world was accustomed to believe that the continent was first seen by Abel Tasman in 1642, and this is asserted in nearly every work upon the subject, published up to the time of Flinders. A better acquaintance with geographical writers made the public aware that the date of the discovery was some years earlier. At last it seemed to be agreed that the Gulf of Carpentaria was the first part of Australia seen by the Dutch, sometime about

* Magalhaens was a Portuguese. The Spaniards call him Magalhanes, and the French Magellan, which latter name is always used with reference to the Straits discovered by him. *See* "Hawksworth's Coll. Voy." Lond., 1773.

the month of March, 1606, beating the Spaniard Torres (of Quiros' expedition) by five months only. Then the inquiry was thought to be set at rest. Probably it would have ended there but for Mr. Major, whose investigations have placed the discovery still further back, and given the honour to the Portuguese. The facts are briefly as follow:—Six very ancient maps are in existence, on which, immediately below Java, and separated from it by a narrow strait (evidently an imaginary and not a surveyed line), a large continent is laid down, whose general outline in some degree corresponds with the coast of Australia. The earliest of these maps is in the British Museum, presented thereto by Sir Joseph Banks. It formerly belonged to Harley, Earl of Oxford. Two of the others are also in the British Museum, and all the six seem to be copies of a French one; but the names of the geographical features where they are marked are, with few exceptions, Portuguese.

Some of the charts bear the clearest internal evidence of having been made prior to the year 1540, and therefore the discovery of the land referred to must have preceded that time. The names of the geographical features being in Portuguese, leaves very little doubt as to the country of the discoverers, but it has not been clearly ascertained why all the maps extant on the subject should have come from French sources.

No one, however, can look at the maps without being struck with the discrepancy between the Australia there depicted and what we know it to be in fact. The explanation of this is best given by Mr. Major, who says: "With respect to longitude, it may be advanced, that with all the discrepancies observed in the maps here presented, there is no other country but Australia, lying between the same parallel and of the same extent, between the east coast of Africa and the west coast of America, and that Australia does in reality lie between the same meridians, as the great mass of the country here laid down." *

* "Early Voyages to Terra Australis."

It may therefore be considered established that Australia was discovered by the Portuguese prior to 1540, and was known among them as Great Java or Terra Australis. Lest any doubt should remain upon this head, Mr. Major cites also the following passage from C. Wytfliet's "Descriptionis Ptolemaicæ Augmentum Louain," 1598 :—"The Australis Terra is the most southern of all lands, and is separated from New Guinea by a narrow strait. Its shores are hitherto but little known, since after one voyage and another that route has been deserted, and seldom is the country visited, unless when sailors are driven there by storms. *The Australis Terra begins at two or three degrees from the equator, and is ascertained by some to be of so great an extent, that if it were thoroughly explored, it would be regarded as a fifth part of the world.*"

But who was the discoverer? This has not been ascertained, but many ingenious theories have been suggested. It should be remarked that Mr. Major was not the first to draw attention to these maps as furnishing information of an earlier discovery of Australia. They were alluded to by Flinders, and in 1807 they formed the subject of a paper read before the French Institute by M. Barbie du Bocage. On this occasion he pointed out that the charts were known to exist in England, and probably furnished some hints to Captain Cook as to the direction in which he was to steer. He then enters into an elaborate essay; first, to show why the discovery of the continent remained a secret, and secondly, to prove that Gomez de Sequiera, a Spaniard, was the person who made it.

The second point of the argument is very ably disposed of by Mr. Major, who shows that Gomez never was near the locality in question. But the first part is more probable. M. du Bocage undertakes to show why the Portuguese kept their discovery a secret. He says that an arbitrary line had been agreed upon between the Spanish and Portuguese governments to prevent the discoveries of either nation entrenching upon the limits of what they considered their respective properties. The Portuguese had recently obtained the

Moluccas from the Spanish Crown, thereby tacitly acknowledging the right of the Spaniards to the area in which Australia lies. When the latter was discovered, they were anxious, of course, to make use of it for themselves; but as this was impossible just then, they kept its existence a secret. Probably also they feared that in such a large extent of country a settlement might be made for trading purposes by another nation, and thereby considerably injure their recent acquisition in the Moluccas. This is the only explanation that has been offered. Certainly it is not quite satisfactory, but the circumstance is hardly of considerable importance.

It is singular that one of these maps should contain French equivalents for three names given by Cook to the same places on the east coast. But it seems to be no more than a coincidence. Even supposing, however, that Cook had seen the maps and the names, one cannot see how the circumstance would in the least detract from his merit. He only professed to have explored the eastern parts of the Australian coast; and in what he did these imperfect and rude charts could have been of no assistance to him whatever.

Another visit to Australia in early times has been recently made known to us by the indefatigable Mr. Major. In an old chart of the world in the British Museum, Australia is depicted, and accompanied by a statement to the effect that it was discovered by Manoel Godina de Heredia, in 1601. It is known that Godina was a Spaniard and a pilot, but nothing more, as yet, has been ascertained about him or his voyage. Doubtless, Mr. Major will soon supply that deficiency.

We come now to a different period: no longer the period of doubts, conjectures, or surmises, but one of authentic facts, solid and substantial, like the people and their ships which supplied them. These are the discoveries of the Dutch. They were quite new at geographical discoveries at this time. For a long time these seas saw no flags but those of Spain and Portugal, and heard no voices except those speaking the grand and sonorous languages of the Peninsula. For more

than one hundred years these people—splendid in their liberality for prosecuting discovery, splendid in their courage and energy—had explored the wild intricacies of these remote parts without any rival. Abroad, they made new conquests daily, and at home their blood and treasure were freely spent in trying to conquer a people who were destined to supplant them. The Spanish dominion in the Netherlands was teaching the people that if they were mastered in the struggle, there were other lands besides their own on which they might fight Spain. So, in 1598, an expedition to the South Seas was fitted out by the Dutch Republic. For a long time before this, the Dutch were learning all about the Indies from the Spanish merchants for whom they worked; and many a Dutchman was employed by them in these Eastern possessions, who returned and spread the news of the immense wealth to be acquired in those distant shores.*

In 1602, the Dutch East India Company was established. The glory of the Spanish marine was now upon the wane. It still shone with the names of Torres and Quiros, in the East, while a host of energetic men were pushing forward discovery in the West. But its full glory had departed. It was the sunset of a splendid and bright day, whose noon-day splendour will not be forgotten as long as the name of Columbus can be pronounced.

In 1606, we have a record of a visit to Australia made by the Dutch yacht *Duyphen*. These Netherlanders were early astir, it appears, in looking around them in their new possessions. The account of the voyage, as it has reached us, is of the most meagre kind. It only informs us that, on the 18th November, 1605, the Dutch yacht *Duyphen* was despatched from Bantam, to explore the island of New Guinea, and that she sailed along what was thought to be the west side of that country, as far as 19° 45′ S. lat. The coast was found to be a desert, and inhabited in some places by wild, cruel, black savages, by whom some of the crew

* "Histoire Philosophique et Politique des Etablissements et du Commerce des Europeens dans les deux Indes." Par. M. l'Abbe Raynal. Geneva, 1775.

were murdered. For this reason they could not learn anything of the land or waters as they were desired, and, for want of provisions and other necessities, they were obliged to leave the discovery unfinished. The furthest point was marked on their maps Cape Keer Weer, or Turnagain. This was in the Gulf of Carpentaria, and, according to Flinders, a little to the south-west of Cape York. It was at that time all supposed to be a part of New Guinea.*

From this it would appear that even correct maps of Australia can be dated back to a very early period in Dutch colonial history. Of course, two hundred and sixty years does not seem a very long time, but with reference to the state of navigation, or rather, the primitive state of the ships, and the knowledge of the navigators, it is removed from our times by almost ages. In 1606 (for in that year was the discovery made, since in June the *Duyphen* returned to Banda), the destruction of the Armada was but a thing of yesterday, and Drake, Hawkins, and Frobisher, had scarcely been ten years dead. At the same time, Galileo was lecturing on astronomy, Newton was not yet born, and Lord Bacon was commencing his literary career, by writing stray essays. Truly, the Continent came into notice in good company.

Scarcely had the *Duyphen* been absent five months, when the keel of the white man's ships again made a track upon the desolate waters of Carpentaria. It was to the last expiring effort of the Spanish marine in the fields of discovery that the visit was due. There had been rumours of a great southern continent long rife among the Spaniards, probably from some vague legends like those in the case of America, and probably also, like some glimmerings of light, the truth had leaked out from the Portuguese navigators. In 1567, Alvaro de Mendana, in a voyage from Callao, discovered the Solomon Isles and several others.† In 1595, he made another voyage, discovering the Marquesas and the islands called subsequently by Carteret, Queen Char-

* "Flinders' Voyage to Terra Australis." London, 1814.
† "Collection of Voyages," by Samuel Purchas. 5 vols.

lotte's Islands. In his second voyage he had for his pilot Pedro Fernandez de Quiros, a Portuguese, who believed that at the Island of Santa Cruz, the great southern land had been discovered. Shortly after his return he memorialized the Spanish Government to be allowed to prosecute his voyage in search for the far-famed Australis Terra. His request was granted by Philip III., and he returned to Peru with full powers to continue the discoveries of Mendana. He sailed from Callao on 21st December, 1605, with two vessels and a corvette. The second vessel was commanded by Luis Vaez de Torres. Great things were anticipated from this expedition, which was splendidly equipped; but its discoveries were not very important until they reached the New Hebrides. These were immediately concluded to be the great southern land. The islands were named Tierra Austral del Espiritu Sancto. But here the expedition may be said to have terminated. While lying in the bays of one of these islands, Quiros most unaccountably sailed away from his companion, on the night of the 11th June, 1606. Torres had no thought of returning, but continued his explorations to the westward. He soon found that their Australia was an island, and in August reached the south coast of New Guinea, as he thought, but now known as the Louisiade chain of islands. "From these," he says, "we went along 300 leagues of coast, and diminished the latitude 2½°, which brought us into 9°. From hence we fell in with a bank of from three to nine fathoms, which extends along the coast to 7½° S. lat., and the end of it is in 5°. We could not go further on, for the many shoals and great currents, so we were obliged to sail south-west in that depth to 11° S. lat. There is all over it an archipelago of islands without number, by which we passed, and the end of the eleventh day the bank became shoaler. There were very large islands, and there appeared more to the southward. They were inhabited by black people, very corpulent, and naked. Their arms were lances, and arrows, and clubs of stone, ill-fashioned. We could not get any of their arms. We caught in all this land twenty persons, of different

nations, that with them we might be able to give a better account to your Majesty. They give much notice of other people, though, as yet, they do not make themselves well understood."

From the latter parts of the coast described, Torres stood to the northward. There can be no doubt that he sailed through the straits which bear his name, and which separate Australia from New Guinea, but I can hardly agree with Mr. Major in his opinion that the large islands seen to the south were the hills of Cape York. In the first place, Torres calls them islands, and though that may be explained, the description he gives of the natives is in no way applicable to the aborigines of Australia. They are not corpulent, and such a thing as a bow and arrow is unknown among them in the whole extent of the continent, and nearly so in the adjacent islands.* The description is more applicable to some of the islands of Torres straits. If, therefore, Torres did not see the mainland of the continent, his only connexion with the Australian exploration is in discovering that New Guinea and the great southern land were separated by a strait. Even this fact was ignored by subsequent geographers; for all the results of Torres' expedition lay buried in the archives of Manilla until 1762.

What became of Torres we never learn. He was badly received at Manilla, and immediately despatched to Spain the three monks who were with him, with a statement of his grievances, and also the reasons why he was unable to proceed with his ship. This despatch is the only record we have of the voyage. Whether it ever reached its destination we know not; for the one found was discovered by the British in Manilla, among the archives of the Spanish Government. Quiros returned home after parting with him, and reached Callao nine months after he had left it. He continued to petition for another expedition to further his discoveries, but without success. The Spanish Government

* Bows and arrows are sometimes, however, seen at the extreme end of Cape York, but only among a tribe which has recently settled there from the Darnly Islands. *See* Jukes's "Voyage of H.M.S. *Fly*." London, 1847.

must have regarded these explorers as the most exacting race of mortals, and explorations the most expensive of amusements. The more they got, the more they wanted; each exploration only served as a prelude to another. There is no doubt that the Spanish authorities were tired of it, and ceased to take interest in its results. Quiros begged to be furnished with means, but in vain. He died in 1614, unsatisfied, and probably unrewarded.

The next voyage to Australia was by the Dutch. It was undertaken in 1617, by a small vessel, and we know nothing more of the result than that it had little success. But about this time discoveries began to come in thick and fast. Vessels bound for Bantam were obliged to pass very near the longitude of Australia. If they were driven at all to the eastward by storms or currents, they were sure to meet some part of its sandy shores. They were not exactly the vessels for exploration. When a ship was being equipped for the Dutch possessions, it was a regular event in Amsterdam; for it was not like one of our modern clippers sailing once a month with general cargo and such passengers as they could pick up. It was an affair of long deliberation. There was merchandize for a long course of trading; there were specie and supplies of various kinds for the settlements. Properly speaking, there were no passengers; everyone on board was a part of the expedition. But this often included great personages. There were frequent changes of officers in the settlements; and thus presidents, governors-general, ambassadors, and officials, enshrined in all the importance of high-sounding names, to say nothing of the gold lace and coloured clothes, with which such names were accompanied, often formed part of the motley crew. And then the ships themselves: their images must be familiar to any acquainted with the Dutch paintings of that period. The high poop and the solid broad prow; the heavy masts and the loose entanglement of swinging cordage; the quarterdeck with hanging rows of buckets surmounted by the great, big lamps, all lumbering and heavy, and in thorough keeping with

the clumsy costume of the phlegmatic Netherlander. It seems difficult to connect all this with Australia, where cities like Ballarat run up in a few years, and clipper ships run to and fro like Italian proas.

In 1816, one of these big floating castles, named the *Endraght*, or *Concord*, drifted its huge proportions on to the west coast, and anchored in a bay then called after its commander, Dirk Hartog's Bay. This was the Sharks' Bay of Dampier, not a very delectable locality, as we shall learn by-and-by. Before reaching this inlet, the *Endraght* passed an archipelago of coral islands, ugly and treacherous, but surrounded by a warning ring of roaring breakers. These reefs were named Houtman's Abrolhos, the first title after a Dutch captain, the second after a Portuguese expression, meaning, significantly enough, "open your eyes." Other vessels made a nearer and more unfortunate acquaintance with reefs, as we shall soon see. Dirk Hartog left a record of his visit, on a tin plate, which was found by Vlamingh eighty years after, during which time geographical knowledge had not progressed very much. Vlamingh's plate was found with Hartog's, nailed to a post, in 1803, by the officers of Baudin's expedition. In 1838, both had entirely disappeared.*

Mr. Major shows that the Abbé Prévost, President De Brosses, and after both, our countryman, Callander, have fallen into a strange error, in supposing that a discovery of Arnhern's land was made in 1618. No voyage of discovery was made at that time. De Brosses, after mentioning this imaginary voyage, states rather gratuitously, that Van Diemen, Governor-General of the Dutch possessions in India, about this time greatly prosecuted discovery in the southern hemisphere; that is, we must suppose that he may have suggested this voyage, which never took place.† The other facts connected with discoveries made in Australia by outward-bound Dutch ships are of the most imperfect kind.

* "Expedition to North-West Australia," by G. Grey. London, 1841.

† "Histoire des Navigations aux Terres Australis." Paris, 1756. The copy in my possession has no author's name, but is evidently the work of De Brosses.

They can only be enumerated, for their mere occurrence is all that can be ascertained about them; even this much would have been lost, but that they are preserved in the letter of instruction given to Tasman, when, to guide him on his voyage, a relation of all that had been previously done is supplied. Apart from this, we only know that a vessel named the *Mauritius* is supposed to have made some discoveries near the north-west cape, especially of a river named the Willem's River. This must have been the Hardey, or the Ashburton, recently discovered by F. Gregory, in an expedition from Western Australia.

After this, the list which follows is from Tasman's letter. John Edels discovered a portion of the south-western coast, which bore the name of Edels' Land in consequence. A Dutch vessel named the *Leuwin* (*Lioness*) passed round the great south-westerly cape, which received in consequence the name of the vessel. An expedition was undertaken in January, 1623, in the yacht *Pera* and *Arnhem*, which sailed from Amboyna under the command of Jan Carstens. Two supposed islands were sighted and named the Arnhem and Spilt. The vessels were then separated. The yacht *Pera* pursued the exploration. She sailed along the south coast of New Guinea, to a cove situated in 10° south lat., and thence to Cape Keerweer, and further southward as far as 17°; when a river was found and named Statem River. The land was seen stretching to the westward far beyond this, but the *Pera* now returned to Amboyna.

The first discovery of the southern coast of Australia was made in 1627, and named Nuyts Land. There is reason for believing that this was not the name of the commander of the expedition, and the ship's name was *Gulde Zeepaard*. These discoveries are supposed to have extended from Cape Leuwin to very near the end of the Australian Bight, and very poor discoveries they were. With the exception of a little elevated and grassy land near King George's Sound, which very likely the Dutch did not see, there is nothing but barren sand hills, arid cliffs, and dismal salt lagoons. Unfortunately, too, had

the explorers gone along the other or western side, they could not have seen much better.

In 1628, De Witt's Land was named probably by De Witt himself, in sailing along this coast on his return from India. In the same year eleven vessels were equipped by the Dutch East India Company. They sailed from Texel on the 28th October. After they had passed the Cape of Good Hope, one of them, the *Batavia*, commanded by Francis Pelsart, became separated from the others in a storm. While beating about for some time, the crew discovered Australia, but in a most dismal manner. The vessel, like all the Dutch East Indiamen, carried an enormous crew besides passengers, making a living freight of human beings utterly unprovided for in case of accident. The *Batavia* drifted about for many days, the pilots fondly fancying that they were steering for Bantam, but without the slightest idea where they were. One bright moonlight night, fair and calm, while the ship was going easily along, the master of the vessel called attention to the white appearance of the water beyond them. The steersman merely said it was the moonlight reflection from the waters. But he was wrong. It was foam from breakers, and when the ship got fairly into it, she struck heavily. Pelsart, who was ill in bed, immediately ran on deck, and upbraided the master, asking where they were. He replied simply enough, that God only knew that. Meanwhile, they tried the lead, and found 48 feet of water ahead and less astern. An old tub of the old school she must certainly have been if she could not float in that. However, float she would not, so they commenced throwing the cannon overboard to lighten her. This might have succeeded, but a storm of wind and rain arose, says Pelsart, in his quaint journal, and the vessel began to bump most ominously upon the rocks around them. Then they cut away the mainmast, but this only increased their danger, because it became entangled in the rigging and lay alongside. The journal is worth quoting at this stage of the proceedings. "They could see no land, except an island which was about the distance of three leagues, and two small

islands, or rather rocks, which lay nearer. They immediately sent the master to examine them, who returned about nine in the morning, and reported that the sea at high water did not cover them, but that the coast was so rocky and full of shoals that it would be very difficult to land upon them. They resolved, however, to run the risk, and to send most of their company on shore to pacify the women, children, sick people, and several as were out of their wits with fear."* The last statement, though not very clear, shows that the good ship *Batavia* had a very miscellaneous collection of people on board, and gives us a glimpse of what an unpleasant thing a passage in such vessels was, even where one was not shipwrecked. The journalist goes on to say, "About ten o'clock they embarked these (women, children, and sick) in their shallop and skiff, and perceiving that the vessel began to break up, they redoubled their diligence. They likewise endeavoured to get their bread up, but did not take the same care of the water, not reflecting in their fright that they might be much distressed on shore for want of it. But what hindered them most of all was, the brutal behaviour of some of the crew, who made themselves drunk with the wine, of which no care was taken. In short, such was the confusion, that they made but three trips that day, carrying over to the island 180 persons, twenty barrels of bread, and some small casks of water. The master returned on board towards evening, and told the captain that it was to no purpose to send more provisions on shore, since the people only wasted those they had already. Upon this the captain went in the shallop to put things in order, and was there informed that there was no water to be found upon the island."

The rest of the story must be stated briefly. Water was found at last on one of the islands, but it was a long time before it was discovered, because the holes in which it was, used to fill and empty themselves at the rise and fall of the tide, and were naturally con-

* This account is taken from Callander's "Terra Australis Cognita; or, a Collection of Voyages to the Australis Terra." London, 1763. It is, I regret to say, for the honesty of our countryman, only an unacknowledged translation of De Brosses' work.

cluded to be salt water. When things were a little in order, Pelsart put a deck to one of the ship's boats and coasted along towards Batavia. This he reached in safety. Those who were left behind had a sad time of it. Half of them mutinied, and tried to murder the other half for the sake of getting control of the cargo. They nearly succeeded, but the few survivors, fighting resolutely for their lives, succeeded in escaping to a neighbouring island. Here they were exposed to daily attacks from the mutineers, until Pelsart returned. The narrative tells us, with admirable brevity, that the majority voted for the immediate execution of the mutineers, which was then and there carried into effect.

In proceeding to Batavia, Pelsart was enabled to see a good deal of the western coast. The mainland was about sixteen miles north by west from the place where they suffered shipwreck. He reported the shore as low, naked, and exceedingly rocky, being nearly the same height as that near Dover. Further on, it presented one continuous rock of red colour, and of an equal height. Pelsart landed above Shark's Bay, and found that there was in front of the coast a "table of sand," one mile in breadth, and none but brackish water to be found on it. Beyond this, the country was flat, without vegetation or trees, with nothing in view but ant-hills, and these so large that from a distance they were taken to be the habitations of the natives. Some of the savages were seen carrying clubs, and apparently anxious to surprise and massacre the boat's crew.

In April, 1636, two vessels, named the *Amsterdam* and *Wezel*, sailed to explore Australia, under the command of Captain Pool. The latter was murdered at New Guinea, and the expedition returned without effecting anything. Up to this time no expedition had been undertaken for the sole purpose of exploring the south land. Pool's sad beginning and ending was not very encouraging to the Dutch, but still they persevered. In 1642, another expedition was equipped. This was placed under the command of the celebrated Tasman. On the 14th August, 1642, he sailed from Batavia with

two vessels, the *Heemskirk* and *Zeehaan*, on a voyage of discovery. The *Zeehaan* was merely a fly-boat or tender. The expedition sailed to the Mauritius, which they reached on the 5th September. That island, which had been first discovered by the Spaniards, who had named it Cerné, was subsequently claimed by the Dutch and re-named Maurice, after the Prince of Orange. At the time of Tasman's visit it was governed by Van Steelan, and was far from being considered an important place.* On the 4th of the following month, the vessels set sail again, and on the 27th it was determined to keep a man constantly at the masthead, promising three reals and a pot of arrack to the one who should first discover land. Their plan was to steer along the 44th parallel of latitude, until the 150th meridian of longitude, and if they had not then seen land to keep more to the northward.

On the 17th November, they concluded that they had passed the extreme southern limits of the great south land, but five days afterwards they saw land bearing east by north. This was Tasmania, and the portion first seen has since been known as Point Hibbs. Towards evening the land became more distinct, and something more than the mere outline could be made out.

It was not the usual sandy shore and level table-land. High mountains of conical form could be seen far inland, and between the rocky precipices and dark gorges of the hills a dense, dark forest. It was not until the 1st December that they anchored in a bay, called Fredrick Hendrick Bay, and the continent then received the name of Van Diemen, then Governor of Batavia, a name which most properly has been discontinued for Tasmania.

On the following morning, the boats rowed eagerly in. Every one was anxious to see what the new land was like. It was a marvellous place. The scenery was wild and picturesque beyond description, and, further inland, mountains seemed to rise one above

* Grant's "History of the Mauritius."

another in endless confusion. All were clothed with trees, at which the phlegmatic Dutch gazed up in stupefied astonishment. They remarked some, 60 feet from the ground to the branches. This prepared them for other wonders; and as they found none sufficiently exciting, they were not long in drawing inferences of their existence. They go on therefore to state, that the bark of the trees was taken off by flint, with steps cut to climb for birds' nests, full five feet apart, and indicative of a very tall people. They saw marks such as are left by the claws of a tiger, and brought back excrements of some quadruped. No wonder that after this they should return to the ships; quicker than they came, we may reasonably suppose. It must have been some scared look in their honest round faces which induced the pilot to tell them, as they boarded, that he had heard the sound of voices and a little gong—the latter fact, of course, being simple embellishment.

On the 3rd, they went into another bay, but the surf, they say, prevented their landing; the five feet footsteps not being forgotten, we may be sure. The carpenter, however, was a brave man, and swam ashore, and near four remarkable trees erected a post, and left the Prince's flag flying upon it. This was the last the crew saw of Tasmania. The rock on which the flag was raised still stands, with a fringe of grey ironstone shingle and sheltered under the castellated cliffs of trap rock. It is embosomed by a noble forest, whose green shades encroach upon the verge of the ocean.* It is a pity that more observations were not made at the time, but the reason is obvious. The five feet footsteps did it all, for the journal significantly adds, that "the inhabitants did not show themselves, and we suspected some to be not far from thence watching our doing."†

Tasman was again sent out in 1644, to examine the

* Gell in "Tasmania Journal," vol. ii.

† Burney's "Chronological History of Discovery." Lond.: 1813. It should be mentioned that readers of Burney should verify his authorities, for he sometimes quotes very incorrectly. "Tasman's Journal" is entitled "Journal of Discovery by me, Abel Jans Tasman, of a Voyage from Batavia for making Discoveries of the Great South Land." 1642.

north and north-western coasts of Australia, and to ascertain whether New Guinea were separated from it. In the latter part of his duty he failed, and it was left to Captain Cook to establish the existence of the straits which Torres had first passed through. But Tasman did a great deal, if he did not do all. He succeeded in exploring the north-western portion of this continent as far south as about the 22nd degree. Unfortunately, all traces of his journal are lost. It is somewhat mysterious how so celebrated an expedition could have been so little known, but with the exception of a few passages quoted by Flinders from Witsen, nothing has come down to us. The passages are as follow :—

"In lat. 13° 8′ south, long. 146° 18′ (probably Cape Ford, near Victoria River), the coast is barren. The people are bad and wicked, shooting at the Dutch with arrows (spears), without provocation, when they were coming on shore. It is here very populous.

"In 14° 58′, long. 138°, the people are savage and go naked; none can understand them. In 16° 10′ (all this must have been between Cape Londonderry and Victoria River) the people swam on board of a Dutch ship, and when they received a present of a piece of linen, they laid it on their heads in token of gratitude. Everywhere thereabout the people are all malicious. They use arrows and bows of such length that one end rests upon the ground when shooting. They have also hazegayes and kalawayes (weapons), and attacked the Dutch, but did not know the execution of the guns." We presume that this is a delicate way of saying that some of the natives were shot. On their behalf we must say, that they certainly did not attack the Dutch with those formidable bows and arrows described. Such a thing as a bow is unknown among all the Australian savages, except in the islands of Torres Straits.

"In Hollandia Nova (about Roebuck Bay), Tasman found naked black people with curly air, malicious and cruel, using for arms bows and arrows (hazegayes, &c., as before). They once came to the number of fifty, double armed, dividing themselves into two parties, intending to have surprised the Dutch, who had landed

twenty-five men, but the firing of the guns frightened them so much that they took to flight. Their canoes are made of the bark of trees, their coast is dangerous, there is but little vegetation, the people have no houses." * This was a bad character certainly, and though nearly quite true, Tasman evidently relates it with an animus against the whole tribe Australian.

"In 19° 35′ (about Dampier's archipelago) the inhabitants are very numerous, and threw stones at the boats sent by the Dutch to the shore. They made fires and smoke all along the coast, which it was conjectured they did to give notice to their neighbours of strangers being upon the coast. They appear to live very poorly; go naked; eat yams and other roots."

This is all that we know from Tasman, and that is little enough, beyond his description of the savages, and his contempt for them. Something more, however, has recently transpired. A curious map has been discovered lately by Mr. Major in the British Museum, evidently copied from a chart laid down, perhaps, by Tasman himself. On it, the coast is very accurately delineated, the only errors being, where islands, such as Mornington Island in Carpentaria, are drawn as if they formed part of the mainland.

From this last voyage of Tasman, the name of New Holland began to be applied to the great south land, for it was now clearly understood that it formed one immense continent, which did not extend to the south pole. Its east side still, however, remained a mystery. The north part of it was thought to be New Guinea. The Gulf of Carpentaria is supposed to have been named by Tasman after the governor of the East India Company, who was then in Europe.† There is a romantic story of his having also named Maria Island after the daughter of Van Diemen, to whom he was

* "Historical Collection of the several Voyages of Discovery in the South Pacific Ocean." By Alex. Dalrymple. London: 1769.

† Prevost, in his "Histoire des Voyages," Paris, 1753, says that Carpentaria was discovered by Pieter Carpenter, in 1662. De Brosses shows the error of this by proving that Carpenter was Governor-General of the Dutch Indies, and went home in 1628. See also Major, *ut supra*. Introduct. p. c.

engaged to be married. The tale is simple and pretty and can do no harm; but it is not true.

From Tasman, until the close of the 17th century, many other voyages are supposed to have taken place. Little by little the coast was more and more explored —but by whom and when is a mystery. A vessel named *De Vergulde Draeck* was lost on the Australian coast, in her voyage to Batavia in 1656. Several expeditions were sent by the Company to rescue the survivors from the wreck, and also, if possible, to explore the country, but no important results were obtained. The locality of the wreck was, as usual, the Houtman's Abrolhos.

The first explorer who breaks this long silence is Captain William Dampier. As his name has now become almost a part of Australian history, a few words may be said as to his previous career.

He was born in 1652, of a respectable Somersetshire family. He made two or three voyages in the merchant service, and was also in the navy for a short time. In 1674 he went to Jamaica as a planter, and spent five years between that island, Campeachy, and London. He embarked in a privateer in 1679; and thenceforth his adventures among the Buccaneers exceed the wildest of tales of romance. In 1683 he went on a voyage round the world under Captain Harvey, but it was not until 1688 that he visited Australia.

It was a buccaneering voyage under Captain Swan, and he tells us, that being short of provisions, they stood away to the northward of where he was intending to go, in order to see New Holland.

On the 4th January he reached its shores somewhere about Roebuck Bay, "the land lowe and a sandy bay, but no shelter for us, therefore we run downe along the shore, which lyes N. E. by E. 12 leagues. Wee then came to a point with an iland by it. . . . . From this pointe the land runs more easterly and makes a deepe bay with many ilands in it, the sixth day wee came into this bay and anchored."

Dampier drew a sketch of this bay, or, as he says, "drewe a drafte," but the sketch was lost by his boat

upsetting. His first care after anchoring, was to seek a conference with the natives, who were anxiously watching his proceedings; but they fled when the boat neared the land. Three days were spent searching for their houses, "being in hopes," says Dampier, "to allure them with toyes to a comerce." But no houses were found. This was a great disappointment for Dampier's captain, who anticipated refitting his ship on these shores. He accordingly gave the land a bad character, and makes out a very strong case of poverty against the natives. He says they have no flesh, nor fowl, nor pulse, nor grain, nor in fact anything, not even dogs nor cats; "indeed, they have noe occasion for such creetures, unless to eat them." He describes how they caught fish by means of "weares," in the bay, which he thought was a very precarious means of subsistence. It seems, too, that the crew must have made some sort of acquaintance with them, for Dampier says that the produce of the day's fishing is taken home to the families, who lie behind a few boughs stuck up to keep the wind from them. He also describes their weapons very correctly, adding, that they must have been made with stone hatchets, like those he had seen in the West Indies. He winds up his description by speaking of their thin bodies and leanness, which he said he judged came from their want of food.

Dampier's observations are singularly correct, and seem to have been made with great regard for truth. It is curious to compare them with those of Tasman. The Dutchman is continually upbraiding the natives for being cruel and murderous characters, complaining of their killing or trying to kill his crew. The Englishman finds fault with them principally because they had nothing to eat.

The navigators did not leave the coast until the 12th February following. It appears that while they remained, the ship was hauled on shore, and thoroughly cleaned and repaired. The men meanwhile got plenty of turtle. When leaving, Dampier was near making Australia his last resting-place, for he tells us that he suggested to his captain the propriety of going to Fort St. George, or any settlement where the English had no fortifica-

tion; and his thanks were to be "threatened to be turned a-shore in New Holland for it."*

Long after this visit, that is in 1695, the Dutch became anxious about a ship named *Ridderschap*, which was missing, and which they naturally enough concluded to be ashore on the Houtman's Abrolhos. Those ships were put under the command of William Vlamingh, with directions to search the coast as far as they could for the wreck; and, not finding it, to explore the shore. The expedition sailed from Holland. It was ordered to make some observations about Tristan d'Acunha, and other islands on their route. All these things they accomplished successfully, and on the morning of 25th December, 1696, sighted the south land, very near the entrance of Swan River. They described the coast as low and sandy, stretching from north to south. Four days subsequently they discovered an island, which they called, from the abundance of rats' nests which were found upon it, Rottenest Island. There was a smaller island to the south of this, Garden Island, and the ships were anchored almost between the two. They found the south-east side rocky and stony. About three-quarters of a mile inland were seven or eight great rocks, and here and there were banks of good land stretching from the shore up to them. The east side was sandy; and, indeed, that was the character of the greater part of the island, which seemed to the Dutch quite unfit for cultivation. In the middle, the island contained a few lagoons of bad water. Having supplied themselves with wood and water, a council was held as to the prudence of landing on the main. It was agreed to do so with a strongly armed party, amounting in all to eighty-six men.

On the 5th January, 1697, the party was disembarked upon the shore. At first they marched to the eastward, finding only gum-trees, shells, and parrots, until they reached a deserted native hut, and shortly afterwards some salt lakes. These salt lakes subsequently proved

* It is worthy of remark that Dampier's vessel was supplied with water here. There must be, therefore, some river in this locality. See his "New Voyage round the World." London: 1697. Also Sloane MS. 3236, entitled "The Adventures of William Dampier, with others who left Capt. Sherpe, in the South Seas."

to be the mouth of a river, upon which they embarked in their boats. Soon a wonderful bird was seen gently floating upon the waters as they rowed up, none other than the *rara avis*, the black swan. Four were caught, and two brought alive to Batavia. The person who describes the voyage did not go up Swan River with the crew; he only says, that they went along this salt-water river for ten or twelve leagues inland, and found neither good country, nor indeed anything worthy of note. The reason of the chronicler's absence is worth recording in his own pathetic language. "They brought me the nut of a certain tree, having the taste of our large Dutch beans, and those which were younger were like a walnut. I ate five or six of them, and drank of the water from the small pools, but after an interval of four hours, I and five others who had eaten of these, began to vomit so violently, that we were as dead men"! Perhaps they *were* Dutch beans, though it may be doubted whether even these have such an effect on dead men.

Another expedition was made up the river when our friend was better. This time many traces of natives were found, but none seen; and they complimented our Australian magpie's voice by imagining that it was that of a nightingale. The country was again described as sandy, and the vegetable productions poor. Plenty of game was noticed, but it was very shy. One remark of the explorer can be endorsed by any one who has lived in Australia during one summer. The country, he says, is free from vermin, but in the day-time one is terribly tormented with flies.

From Swan River the expedition sailed northwards, hauling as close along the coast as the nature of the shore would allow them. It seemed sandy and desolate, with such a terrible surf beating upon it, that they could seldom think of landing. Every one of the crew thought it particularly lonely and deserted, without the slightest appearance of fertility. As they went northward it became higher, and evidently composed of red table-land of sandstone, with the eternal ridge of white sand fronting it like a rampart. In several places they landed, and used to make excursions inshore about four or five

miles. It was all a red sand, dense thicket, full of "briers and thorns." One of the men said he saw a red serpent, another a yellow kind of dog; some remarked the traces of a bird like a cassiowary. Very few natives were seen, and these were in the scrub, near Hutt River, where the Dutch found a native well, at a time when they were regularly entangled in the thicket, suffering extremely from thirst. They spent some time also in examining Sharks' Bay and the country around, but they did not go to the farthest end of it. They landed here, too, many times on the high rocky sandstone shore—but they found no water.

It was during their visit here that they found the memorial of Dirk Hartog's visit, and left the memorial of their own, which was subsequently found by Baudin. After leaving Sharks' Bay they did not land again upon the coast. In fact, they only approached it once or twice, and finding that the holding was bad, and likely to cause a loss of anchors, they agreed to proceed to Batavia. "On the morning of the 21st, says the journalist, "in lat. 21°, we held once more a council; half-an-hour after sunrise our captain came from on board De Vlamingh's vessel, from which five cannon-shot were fired, and three from our vessel, as signal of farewell to the miserable south land." *

The observations of the Dutch in this voyage are singularly accurate. The scrub, the sands, the snakes, native dogs even, are all according to fact, and unfortunately just like what they would meet in the same locality at the present day. We learn from their report that they considered that they had discovered nothing but a bare and desolate region; at least along the coast, and as far as they had penetrated into the interior. A box containing shells, fruits, plants, &c., was sent to Holland by the company, as having been collected on this expedition, but they were considered of no commercial value; even including the sandal-wood found upon the west coast. Probably, the coast was not quite so bad as they considered it. We must remember that

* From MS. documents at the Hague, containing particulars relating to the voyage of Willem de Vlamingh. 1696. Major, *ut sup.*

they were comparing it with those gardens of tropical luxuriance which they had in the Indian archipelago. The river spoken of in this expedition has now upon its banks the city of Perth, which forms the capital of the penal settlement of Western Australia.

The next voyage of importance was that of our countryman, William Dampier, in his last visit in company with a crew of buccaneers, as they were by courtesy called, but answering in all respects to our modern notion of pirates. After being threatened as he was on the coast of New Holland, Dampier became very anxious to leave the ship. This he succeeded in doing at one of the Nicobar islands, from which he reached Sumatra in a canoe. His adventures thenceforth would fill volumes, but he wound up by buying a painted prince as a slave, and bringing him home to London to show *à la* Barnum. He first disposed of half the proceeds of his "exhibition," and then the whole of it; and we can easily understand that his habits on shore were like those of most sailors, not of the most prudent description. He then commenced applications to the Earl of Pembroke, then Lord High Admiral, for permission and means to prosecute his discoveries in New Holland. His request was soon attended to. He was provided with a vessel for the purpose, carrying twelve guns, fifty men, and twenty months' provision; and on the 14th January, 1699, he set sail.*

On the 1st August he first saw land on the west coast of Australia, but it was not until the 6th that he came to an anchor. This was in Dirk Hartog Bay, recently visited by Vlamingh, but Dampier called it Sharks' Bay, because of the immense number of sharks he saw there. The crew landed in search of water, but could not obtain any, nor indeed anything they required, except wood. Dampier, in his journal, enters into a lengthened description of the trees, birds, and reptiles which he collected, and he seems to have been very fond of natural history, and, withal, a truthful observer. Some of

* "Dampier's Voyage to New Holland in the year 1699," vol. iii., 3rd edit., 1729, pp. 75-107, *et ref.* Major, p. 135.

the species are engraved in one account of his voyage,* amongst which appears the beautiful Clianthus, known to the colonists as Sturt's Desert Pea. Dampier mentions, with rather amusing simplicity, that he found the head of a hippopotamus in the stomach of a shark. "The hairy lips," he says, "were still sound, and the jaw was also firm. Out of this we plucked a good many teeth, two of which were eight inches long, and the rest as big as a man's thumb, small at one end and a little crooked." This must have been an animal of the seal tribe. The land, he says, seen from the ship, was of indifferent height, appearing very even at a distance, but as you came nearer, with many gentle risings, neither steep nor high. Near the shore the soil was white sand, but further inland it became red, producing grass in great tufts, with heath and shrubs, the latter about ten feet high, and covered with leaves at the top only. This is the true character of scrub, and what Dampier describes here would suit any scrubs throughout the west and south part of the continent.

Having surveyed a portion of Sharks' Bay, and ascertained that Dorre and Barrier Islands were separated from the land, he sailed in a north-easterly direction. He mentions having seen three great water snakes, of a yellow colour, spotted with dark brown spots, swimming about in the sea.

They were about four feet long, and as thick as a man's wrist, and were the first that Dampier had seen, though he remarks that the coast seemed afterwards to abound with them. This observation has been confirmed by all succeeding explorers. Some of the water snakes grow to an immense size, as, for instance, the *Hydrus Stokesii*, (Gray), which is as thick as a man's thigh, and the giant of the tribe.

Dampier kept coasting along until the 30th, without finding any landing-place. He described and visited the archipelago of islands in lat. 22°, long. 116°, and hence it now bears his name. These islands stretched

* Woodward, in "Dampier's Voyages," vol. iii. p. 111, cap. 4, f. 2. The plant is there called Colutea Novæ Hollandiæ. Its name now is Clianthus Dampieri. R. Brown proposed the name of Eremocharis, from the Greek *ἔρημος*, *desert*.

out so far, that he doubted whether there was any continent of Australia at all. At any rate, he said, he was sure that the land was not joined to New Guinea. The islands were pretty high, but all appeared dry and mostly rocky, barren, and of a rusty yellow colour. He landed on one, and had an encounter with the natives, which is so feelingly described by him, that I think it best to give his own version of the story.

"The 31st August, betimes in the morning, I went ashore with ten or eleven men to search for water. We went armed with muskets and cutlasses for our defence, expecting to see people there; and carried also shovels and pickaxes to dig wells. When we came near the shore we saw three tall, black, naked men on the sandy bay ahead of us; but as we rowed in they went away. When we were landed, I sent the boat with two men in her to lie a little from the shore, at an anchor, to prevent being seized, while the rest of us went after the three black men, who were now got on the top of a small hill, about a quarter of a mile from us, with eight or nine men more in their company. They, seeing us coming, ran away. When we came on the top of the hill where they first stood, we saw a plain savannah, about half a mile from us, further in from the sea. There were several things like haycocks standing in the savannah, which, at a distance, we thought were houses, looking just like the Hottentots' houses at the Cape of Good Hope: but we found them to be so many rocks. We searched about these for water, but could find none, nor any houses, nor people, where we landed; and there we dug for water. While we were at work, there came nine or ten natives to a small hill a little way from us, and stood there menacing and threatening of us, and making a great noise. At last one of them came towards us, and the rest followed at a distance. I went to meet him, and came within fifty yards of him, making to him all the signs of peace and friendship I could; but then he ran away, neither would they any of them stay for us to come nigh them, for we tried two or three times. At last I took two men with me, and went in the afternoon along the sea-side purposely to

catch one of them, if I could, of whom I might learn where they got their fresh water. There were ten or twelve of the natives a little way off, who seeing us three going away from the rest of our men, followed us at a distance. I thought they would follow us; but there being for a while a sandbank between us and them, that they could not then see us, we made a halt, and hid ourselves in a bending of the sandbank. They knew we must be thereabouts, and being three or four times our number, thought to seize us, so they dispersed themselves, some going to the sea-shore, and others beating about the sand-hills. We knew, by what recounter we had with them in the morning, that we could easily outrun them; so a nimble young man that was with me, seeing some of them near, ran towards them, and they for some time ran away before him. But he soon overtaking them, they faced about and fought him. He had a cutlass and they had wooden lances, with which, being many of them, they were too hard for him. When he first ran towards them, I chased two more that were by the shore; but fearing how it might be with my young man, I turned back quickly and went up to the top of a sand-hill, whence I saw him near me closely engaged with them. Upon their seeing me, one of them threw a lance at me, that narrowly miss'd me. I discharged my gun to scare them, but avoiding shooting any of them; till finding the young man in great danger from them, and myself in some, and that, though the gun had a little frighted them at first, yet they had soon learnt to despise it, tossing up their heads and crying, 'Pooh, pooh, pooh!' and coming on afresh with a great noise, I thought it high time to charge again, and shoot one of them, which I did. The rest, seeing him fall, made a stand again, and my young man took the opportunity to disengage himself, and came off to me; my other man also was with me, who had done nothing all this while, having come out unarmed; and I returned back with my men, designing to attempt the natives no farther, being very sorry for what had happened already. They took up their wounded companion; and my young man, who had been

struck through the cheek by one of their lances, was afraid it had been poisoned, but I did not think that likely. His wound was very painful to him, being made with a blunt weapon, but he soon recovered of it.

"The land hereabouts was much like the part of New Holland that I formerly described (vol. i. p. 463); 'tis low, but seemingly barricaded with a long chain of sand-hills to the sea, that lets nothing be seen of what is further within land. At high water, the tides rising so high as they do, the coast shows very low; but when 'tis low water it seems to be of an indifferent height. At low-water mark the shore is all rocky, so that then there is no landing with a boat; but at high water a boat may come in over those rocks to the sandy bay, which runs along all on this coast. The land by the sea for about five or six hundred yards is a dry, sandy soil, bearing only shrubs and bushes of divers sorts. Some of these had then at this time of the year, yellow flowers or blossoms, some blue and some white, most of them of a very fragrant smell. Some of them had fruit-like peascods, in each of which there were just ten small peas: I opened many of them, and found no more nor less. There are also here some of that sort of bean which I saw at Rosemary Island, and another sort of small, red, hard pulse, growing in cods also, with little black eyes like beans. I know not their names, but have seen them used often in the East Indies for weighing gold; and they make the same use of them at Guinea, as I have heard, where the women also make bracelets with them to wear about their arms. These grow on bushes; but here are also fruit-like beans, growing on a creeping sort of shrub-like vine. There was great plenty of all these sorts of cod fruit growing on the sand-hills by the seaside, some of them green, some ripe, and some fallen on the ground; but I could not perceive that any of them had been gathered by the natives, and might not probably be wholesome food.

"The land further in, that is lower than what borders on the sea, was, so much as we saw of it, very plain and even, partly savannahs and partly woodlands. The savannahs bear a sort of thin coarse grass. The mould is

also a coarser sand than that by the seaside, and in some places 'tis clay. Here are a great many rocks in the large savannah we were in, which are five or six foot high, and round at the top like a haycock, very remarkable, some red and white. The woodland lies farther in still, where there were divers sorts of small trees, scarce any three foot in circumference; their bodies twelve or fourteen feet high, with a head of small knibs or boughs. These were the only discoveries of our countryman, and he left the coast early in September."

Thus far Dampier. The next expedition of which we have any particulars is that of three Dutch vessels which sailed from Batavia, in 1705, to examine the shores of New Holland. In April of that year, they explored the north-west coast, which at that time was called Van Diemen's Land. They were occupied until the 12th of July, exploring and naming the various points on the coast. They found two deep indentations in the land, which they considered straits, and then came to the remarkable conclusion, that the great south land was only a chain of islands. They had several communications with the natives. With the exception of a vessel named the *Zeewyk*, which was wrecked upon the Houtman's Abrolhos in June, 1727, no other ship visited this coast, or rather no record of any such visit exists, until we come to the time of Captain Cook. The *Zeewyk* was wrecked on an island, named Gun Island by Captain Stokes, in lat. 28° 53′ 10″; long. 113° 50′, or 1° 53′ 35″ west of Swan River. The crew were enabled to build a sloop from the fragments of the wreck, and thus reached Batavia in safety. Captain Stokes, in 1839, found a gun upon this island, besides many relics dated about the period of the ship's loss. At the same time, a part of Captain Pelsart's vessel, the *Batavia*, was found, with a coin dated 1620, and several fragments of iron so corroded as to be quite unrecognisable. The particulars will be stated further on.*

* It should be borne in mind, with reference to the latitudes and longitudes given in this work, that all the latitudes are south of the equator, and all the longitudes east of the meridian of Greenwich.

CHAPTER II.

COOK'S VOYAGES.

Cook's discoveries in 1770—Point Hicks—Cook's observations on the east coast—Botany Bay—Encounter with the natives—Port Jackson—Broken Bay—Moreton Bay—Bustard Bay—Bay of Islets—Rockingham Bay—Cape Tribulation—Shipwreck of Cook—Endeavour River—The first kangaroo—Repair of the ship—Passage of the Barrier Reef—Weymouth Bay—Torres Straits.

FOR seventy years, the coasts of Australia now remained undisturbed. The desolation of the north and west coast had destroyed all interest in the great south land, as far as the Dutch were concerned; and the east side remained a mysterious secret. In those seventy years, very important changes had taken place in the world's civilization, and those changes very much affected navigation. The Dutch were no longer sole masters of the east. The Spaniards and Portuguese had sluggishly let their possessions fall into decay, and then, little by little, abandoned them. Their place was not, however, vacant: even then, two Powers, the French and English, were striving for the mastery in those seas. In the meantime, ships were being altered and improved; their size was growing larger and their crews were growing smaller, rendering long voyages cheaper, more easy, and less destructive of health. An amazing activity had taken place in all departments of scientific discovery: voyages for the sole purposes of science were now not uncommon, and the names of Byron, Wallis, Carteret, and Bourgainville, testify to the zeal displayed at this time. This was the century in which Australia was to wake up: after slumbering so long, it was now to arise like a giant prepared to run his course: the sleeping beauty was to have the spell broken and receive her crown.

It should be remarked, first, that with all that had been done, the great northern continent still remained a mystery. The Portuguese discoveries had fallen into oblivion. The efforts of the Dutch had been desultory and irregular, and resulted, as we have seen, in leaving the real nature of the continent more doubtful than ever. It is singular that no previous efforts should have been made to explore the eastern side of Australia. The Portuguese must have seen and known its value was different from the west side, whose arid shores and desolate interior served to destroy all interest in its further exploration: yet the eastern side remained unknown. Dampier wished to visit it, and was only deterred from making that the first object of his voyage by the unfavourableness of the season for passing the Straits of Magellan. That the Dutch should have explored the west side only is easily understood: that was the only part with which they were brought into contact in their voyages to Batavia, and their interest did not lead them elsewhere; but England and France had need of such discoveries, and it is certainly wonderful that they were allowed to escape so long.

In 1767, the Royal Society resolved to send to the South Sea an expedition, to observe the transit of Venus. They contemplated nothing more at the time; but owing to the connection between great events and little causes, this transit of Venus was the means of placing Australia in the possession of Great Britain. The Royal Society, it should be observed, were not in a position to undertake the enterprise, and they therefore petitioned the king for funds to carry it out. The petition was immediately complied with. At first, it was suggested that Alexander Dalrymple should have the command of the ship; but the selection was afterwards made of James Cook, who was then distinguished in the navy for his scientific acquirements.

Cook showed his judgment first in the choice of a vessel for the expedition. At a time when most naval men were of opinion that exploration could only be properly conducted in an East Indiaman or a three-decker, Cook chose a bark of 370 tons burden; she

was called the *Endeavour*, and fitted with eighteen months' provisions and twenty-two guns. She was manned by a crew of eighty-five persons, amongst whom were Mr. Joseph Banks and Dr. Solander.

Cook sailed in July, 1768. With the first part of his voyage, this work has nothing to do; it will be sufficient to say, that the astronomical observations were made, and then the time was taken up in exploring until April, 1770. At that date, they set sail from New Zealand on a north-west course, and thus came upon the south-east coast of Australia.

The first land that was seen was in lat. 38°; long. 148° 53′. It was discovered by Lieut. Hicks, who was the first Englishman to see this part of Australia. The point he descried was named after him, but it is seldom to be found on any maps; and yet, poor fellow! he deserves some little recognition for his services in Australia, as they cost him his life. He died of consumption before he reached home.

To the southward of Point Hicks, no land was to be seen, though Van Diemen's Land ought to have borne due south; but Cook suspected its existence there, for he says that the sea fell suddenly after the wind, as though there were land near. His course from the Point was east-north-east, and thus continued along the land. This was the coast of that part of Victoria known as Gipp's Land. It is an area of vast extent and surprising fertility; but its coast-line is low and sandy, much indented with large salt water inlets, shallow rivers and lagoons. From the shore the land rises rapidly towards the Australian Alps, which are dimly visible from the sea, and long before they are reached the soil becomes richly grassed and extremely fertile. There are many townships now upon these delightful slopes, and several rich gold-fields occur near them; but at the time Cook passed, it was inhabited by one of the most intractable and treacherous tribes of savages with which the white man has ever had to deal in Australia.

But Cook, of course, saw only low and level land, part of which rose moderately high, the sea-shore flat and covered with white sand, but the country within

green and woody. As they advanced, the view became more pleasing. The country was undulating and lightly wooded, showing, in the spots which became visible from time to time, that the grass was green and luxuriant. It was remarked that the hills only rose very gently, but still high, and the timber upon them seemed excellent. No harbour was, however, seen along the whole course; and this fact, unfortunately, has not been contradicted by more recent explorations, except in the case of one or two insignificant bays. The first indentation of the land noticed by Cook was Bateman's Bay. Behind this, and for several leagues on each side, the country was very mountainous. Sometimes the ship approached so close to the land, that the natives were seen watching them intently; but the coast was too open to attempt a landing. As they went northward, a strong current was found setting to the southward, and this, combined with the heavy rolling sea towards the west, made Cook imagine that Van Diemen's Land would be found separated from Australia.

They sailed along the coast for several days, anxiously looking out for a place upon which they could land. As each succeeding mountain rose upon their view, the ingenuity of the crew was taxed to compare it to something. Thus, as the ship glided onward, unfolding the new shore to their absorbed gaze, Mount Dromedary, Mount Pigeonhouse, Long Nose, and Red Point received their names. The mountains became thicker and higher, more gloomy and grand. The coast became more rocky, bold, and precipitous. Let us picture to ourselves the scene. There is Cook upon the quarter-deck, resting his glass upon the cabin lights, and communicating his observations to the officers who stand round. Dr. Solander is straining his eyes to see a native, and Mr. Banks is wondering what a world of botanic discovery lies in that dense thick foliage. The man at the wheel glances aside from the binnacle now and then, as the exclamations of the officers indicate something new. The crew lean listlessly over the side, and wonder what

sort of a place that dark-looking shore can be. Meanwhile, the panorama before them differs from the aspect of most of the countries they have seen. There is first the surf, which comes from long, booming waves striking upon the black cliffs, and casting a shower of white foam into the air. Then there is the foreground of the coast, precipitous and rocky, but a green patch here and there between the valleys, showing that it is fertile too. Then commences the forest, rising like a sloping, rolling sea of dark, very dark, almost black, foliage. Above them are the mountains, of a rich ultramarine blue colour—blue, that is to say, with a tint of beauty which only those who have travelled in Australia can believe possible. Last of all, in the far distance, there are mountains more remote; but these are of an ash-grey hue. These things must have charmed and amazed Cook, for he could not have seen them elsewhere. Owing, probably, to the dryness of the atmosphere, no country possesses such a variety of colour in its landscapes. No mountains are so blue as the Australian mountains; but then one must not expect green trees. At a distance these appear of a positively black or dull brown colour.

In lat. 34° 39′, long. 151° 15′, Red Point was named, and near it were some remarkable white cliffs, which rose perpendicularly from the sea to a considerable height. Four natives were seen here carrying a canoe upon their shoulders, and following the ship along the beach. Cook concluded that they were coming off to the vessel; but this they seemed afraid to do. Placing, therefore, in the yawl as many men as it would carry, he pulled off towards them at a place where there were four canoes lying near the water's edge. The natives sat down upon the rocks, and seemed to wait their landing; but when within a quarter of a mile they ran away into the wood. There was too much surf to think of landing anywhere, and after a little delay the yawl returned to the ship.

Next day an eligible harbour was found, to the great delight of all the crew. While the master was sounding the entrance, the ship lay off and observed

some natives, who were upon the shore, watching them. As the vessel neared, they retired to the top of a little eminence. Soon after, the pinnace, which was employed in sounding, came close to them, and the natives did all they could to induce the master to land. But they were all armed this time with "long pikes and wooden scimitars" (boomerangs), as the master said, and therefore he returned to the ship. The natives, who had not followed the boat, seeing the ship approach, used many threatening gestures, and brandished their weapons. They were all painted for battle, as the custom is amongst them. The paint generally consists of white pipeclay smeared all over the face, and along the arms, across the ribs, and, in fact, in every sort of pattern, according to taste, making them look exactly like skeletons. The weapon like a scimitar, which was evidently a boomerang, they brandished the most of all, and they seemed, says Cook, to talk to each other with great earnestness. Well they might. I think if Cook and his boat's crew were to land in Sydney now, dressed as they then were, the people would come out to see them, and talk a great deal about them.

Notwithstanding all this, the *Endeavour* continued to sail up the bay, and, early in the afternoon, anchored under the south shore, about two miles within the entrance. As they came in they saw on either side of the bay a few huts of the usual wretched character of the Australian dwelling, and several natives sitting near them. Under the south head they saw four small canoes, with one man in each. They were striking fish with a long spear. They ventured very near the surf in their fragile barks, and were so engaged in their employment that they did not see the ship go by them, though it passed within a quarter of a mile. Opposite to where they anchored the ship, there were seven or eight huts. While they were hauling out the boat, an old woman and three children were seen to come out of the forest with firewood. Several children in the huts came out to meet her at the same time. She looked very attentively at the ship, but did not

seem very anxious about it. She then kindled a fire; whereupon the four fishermen rowed on to the land, hauled up their boats, and commenced to dress the fish for their meal. They none of them seemed the least anxious about the ship. It did not excite their astonishment in the least. This apathy, it may be remarked, is one of the most distinctive features in the character of the Australian savage.

Preparations having been completed on board the *Endeavour*, the crew prepared to land. They proposed doing so where the huts were, and hoped that as they cared so little about the ship, the natives would remain and communicate with them. In this they were disappointed. As soon as the boat approached the rocks, two of the men came down to dispute the landing, and the rest ran away. Each of the two champions were armed with a lance about ten feet long, and a woomra, or throwing-stick. They brandished their weapons in a very daring way, though they were only two to forty, and called continually in a strange, harsh language what was evidently a warning to the explorers not to land. Cook, admiring their courage, ordered his men to lie upon the oars while he tried to pacify them. He threw them beads and ornaments, which they seized eagerly, and seemed well pleased with them. But all inducement to allow the boat's crew to land were thrown away. They tried to intimate to them that nothing but water was wanted; but it was no use; they seemed resolved to defend their country from invasion. One was a mere lad, and the other about middle age; and yet there they stood before their huts, confronting forty men, rather than yield their ground. A musket was fired between them. At the report, one dropped his bundle of spears, but recollected himself in a moment, and stood again on the defensive. A charge of small shot was now fired at the legs of the elder. Upon this he retreated to the huts, and Cook and his men immediately landed. But the battle was not over. Scarcely had they set their feet upon the sand when the savage returned. He was armed with a shield this time, hoping thus to protect

his now bleeding legs. Both savages threw spears where the men stood thickest, but they easily avoided them. Another charge of small shot was given. This completed the victory. Native legs could stand it no longer, so they were immediately put to another use. They would have been pursued, and the retreat turned to a rout, but Mr. Banks suggested that their spears might be poisoned. Thus ended the Battle of Botany Bay. Perhaps Cæsar's victories over the British savages were not much more glorious

After the retreat of the blacks, Cook went to the huts, and found three or four children huddled together, and evidently in the greatest state of fear. This was the cause of the heroic resistance of the two natives. It was the natural instinct for the defence of the offspring that animated them, as it would animate a robin under similar circumstances. Having left some presents at the hut, Cook proceeded to examine their spears and canoes. The former were found to be formidable enough, and smeared with a green substance, which the explorers thought was poison. This was merely the seaweed adhering to the point after having been used in fishing. The canoes were of the most wretched description possible. They were twelve or fourteen feet long, and made of the bark of a tree in one piece. The ends were drawn together and tied, and the middle part was kept asunder by sticks placed across.

From this place Cook returned on board, and then went over to the north side of the bay, where he found water. The natives had entirely disappeared. The huts were examined next day. The children had been taken away, but the blacks had carefully avoided touching the beads and ribbons left for them. While the men were filling the casks with water, Cook went sounding in the pinnace. At various parts of the bay he saw the natives again, but they all fled when he approached them. While the crew were at dinner, too, they examined the casks very minutely, but did not attempt to remove them. Once only did they renew any measures of attack. About eighteen of

them came forward, armed to the teeth, and stood about a hundred yards from Lieutenant Hicks, who commanded the water-party. He made every effort he could think of to assure them of his pacific intentions, and to get them to approach nearer, but they retired immediately.

Captain Cook, with Dr. Solander and Mr. Banks, made an excursion on shore while the crew were watering the ship. They went first to the huts, and found the presents still unremoved, though the natives continued to visit the spot every day. Others were left of greater value, and the party then proceeded further inland. The first thing they remarked was the beautiful plumage of the parrots and cockatoos, which flew in clouds over their heads. Next they noticed some wood evidently cut by the stone hatchets of the natives, and some trees which had been stripped of their bark to make canoes and shields. They saw a great sameness in the nature of the trees. They saw also the divisions cut like steps for climbing them; but their distances did not agree with those of Tasman, the space between them being only three feet instead of five. The usual red gum was observed oozing out from the bark, and this attracted their notice, as it did that of every explorer who had landed upon the continent. This gum is a species of kino, and possesses powerful astringent, and probably staining, qualities. No natives were seen upon this journey; but on the return of the party to the watering they found that it was not always so safe to go far from the party. The second-lieutenant, Mr. Gore, and a midshipman, had gone some distance in shore, and they were soon followed by a body of twenty-two natives, who tried to surround them. The savages were armed and coming very close, and though Mr. Gore was quite defenceless, he managed, by facing them boldly from time to time, to return in safety to his party. The natives then stood watching their movements at a distance of about a quarter of a mile. One or two of the sailors, emboldened by their quiet demeanour, walked towards them; but their hearts failing them as they came near,

they turned and fled. This immediately gave rise to a pursuit from the natives, who discharged their spears, fortunately without effect. Just at this time Captain Cook and his party came up, and went towards them to show that they were not afraid. The savages retreated at once, and no entreaty or persuasion could induce them to communicate.

The next time that Cook made an excursion inland he met some few natives, but they all fled now with the greatest precipitation, and from this Cook concluded that they had become acquainted with the destructive nature of firearms from the report of the savage who had been peppered with small shot, and from seeing the birds drop down as they were fired at.

While these observations were being made, the naturalists of the expedition were collecting an immense number of new specimens in natural history. Mr. Banks saw great quantities of quail very like the English quail. Mr. Gore was able to spear many rays in shallow water, some of which weighed over two hundred pounds. Dr. Solander and Mr. Banks were most successful, however, in collecting plants. Everything they saw was new, and, what was more fortunate, a great many of the species were still in flower. The trees were Acacias and Eucalypti, the latter with the surface of the leaves not at right angles to the branch, but placed edgeways towards it. There were beautiful plants like heaths and fuschias, immortelles and bluebells; there were new grasses, new rushes, new mosses, and new fruits, all rivalling the charm of their novelty by their rich and gorgeous hues. This was why the bay was called Botany Bay, and this is also why the place was considered such a paradise by Captain Cook and the naturalists. They left it with regret, we may be sure, little knowing how soon those solitudes were to be awakened once more, never to rest again. It was not, however, until the 6th May that the ship's name and the date were inscribed upon a tree, and the *Endeavour* sailed away.

A few hours after sailing they were abreast of high, steep walls of sandstone rock, which lifted them-

selves proudly against the waves that dashed against them, and shut out the view of all the interior except the Blue Mountains. High over all they were still visible, with the dense foliage as usual, but here and there a red or grey rock starting out like a beacon. The high cliffs continued unbroken for some time, but suddenly terminated in an abrupt precipice, and left a gorge between them and the next succeeding rocky heights. This was an opening to which the look-out man, named Jackson, called attention. The port, in consequence, received his name. This was the first discovery of the famous Sydney Harbour. That evening the vessel was off Broken Bay, so called from the irregularity of its opening. The country became much higher and mountainous in the interior, while the foreground was a little lower, and covered occasionally with white sand. Thus they passed Port Stevens and all the headlands which intervene. A little above the latter place some natives, to the number of twelve, were seen walking along the shore. They did not take any notice of the ship, nor manifest the slightest curiosity by even a casual glance at her as she sailed along.

Now succeeded the low country which forms the deltas of the rivers flowing down from the Blue Mountains or Dividing Range. The land in front was in places a rocky shore of pink granite, overlaid by patches of rock of the trap formation. This rock often rises to ranges of great height, between which the M'Leay, Bellengen, Nambucca, and other streams flow. But Captain Cook saw very little of all this. A part of it was passed in the night, and the rest was too far off the ship to be examined particularly. The next feature, therefore, which we find him describing is Moreton Bay and the adjacent Cape Moreton, some hills near which he called by the distinctive title of Glass-houses, because of their fancied resemblance to horticultural frames. Immediately to the northward of these the country assumes a volcanic character, and the coast becomes more barren. The only soil visible from the deck of the *Endeavour* seemed arid and sandy.

The sands, too, seemed shifting like the dunes upon the south coast, and in their course sweeping over trees whose tops were seen peeping above the hillocks, either covered with green leaves or raising aloft dry and withered branches. In other places the woods appeared to be low and shrubby, with no traces of inhabitants among them. Two water snakes here swam by the ship, differing in no respect from land snakes, except that their tails were flattened for swimming purposes.

The ship passed a point of land with many natives upon it, which was called, in consequence, Indian Head; and some sandy patches on the next promontory earned it the name of Sandy Point. Both these were upon an island, Great Sandy Island, but of this Cook was not aware at the time, so that when he passed the north end of it he considered the strait an inlet, and called it Harvey's Bay. The country was altering much as they proceeded northward, and becoming more tropical in its vegetation. The trees were not so thickly spread over the ground, and among the principal of them were palm-trees. A little below Port Curtis, in a bay named Bustard Bay, the ship was anchored, and the crew landed. On the south side of the bay they found a channel leading into a large lagoon, in which ships, it was thought, might ride in security. Nothing further was seen in any way worthy of notice, and indeed the aspect of the country around was beginning to give them a very poor opinion of the great south land. They found several bays and marshes of salt water, with a fine growth of mangroves upon them, somewhat similar to the same tree in the salt marshes of the West Indies. Two insect curiosities were seen upon these trees, which the explorers found more interesting than agreeable. There were immense numbers of green ants nesting in the branches, which gave a most durable and painful sting when they were disturbed, and caterpillars of the same colour, covered with hairs, which produced a sting like that of the nettle. The soil was very dry and sandy outside the marshes, and supporting no underwood.

Next day the *Endeavour* entered the tropics, and

passed in succession the capes and promontories between Bustard Bay and Thirsty Sound, which lies in lat 22° 10′. There was no water to be found in the latter, and hence the name. Cook landed twice, the second occasion being to observe the bearing of the hills round; but the compass was so much affected by the rocks near, that he could obtain no accurate observations.

There was no inducement to remain in the sound, and Cook accordingly set sail again. Islands now began to make their appearance, and the mainland improved in character. The land, both upon the main and upon the islands, was high, and diversified by hill and valley, wood and lawn, with a green and pleasant aspect. On one of the islands they saw two men and a woman, with a canoe which seemed much larger and of better construction than they had observed in Botany Bay. A passage between Cumberland Islands and the main was discovered and passed through on Whitsunday, and hence was called Whitsunday Passage. It would be endless, however, to describe all the points, bays, and capes which Cook named, because, in the first instance, he does no more than name them, and because a glance at the map will show them as well as they could be shown here. A little beyond Magnetical Isle smoke was seen. It was believed that the natives here were more advanced in civilization, and therefore refreshments could be procured from them. Accordingly, Lieutenant Hicks with Dr. Solander and Mr. Banks were sent ashore, with directions, if they failed in reaching the natives, to procure some cocoa-nuts from the palm-trees on the beach. In the evening they returned, and reported that what they had taken for cocoa-nut trees were only cabbage-palms, and that, with the exception of fourteen or fifteen plants, there was nothing worth bringing away.

Cook did not land again until he had passed Trinity Bay, and then it was under circumstances that were most unfortunate for him. Thus far he had passed along the shore without any untoward accident; and this was all the more singular, as the coast is particu-

larly dangerous, and the *Endeavour* had lain pretty close to it. Just beyond the bay just mentioned, in about lat. 16°, a good many islands became visible, to avoid which the vessel stood out to sea in the evening, intending to lie on that course all night. Cook hoped by this means to stand a chance of seeing some of those islands which Quiros had discovered. It was a beautiful calm evening, with just enough wind to take the ship leisurely along. There was plenty of moonlight, and its light enabled the crew to see a coral reef, close to the edge of which they proceeded cautiously. Suddenly the water shoaled to twelve, ten, and eight fathoms within the space of a few minutes. Cook immediately ordered every man to his station, and was ready to come to an anchor; but having at the next cast of the lead twenty-one fathoms, he concluded that he had passed the last of the shoals. The depth continuing, they left the deck, one by one, in great tranquillity, and nought disturbed the watch for some time longer. The night was clear and very calm, so that there seemed little danger in allowing the ship to keep her course. It would have been better, however, to have anchored. At ten at night the water shoaled again, and before the next cast of the lead could be taken, the ship struck. It may seem strange to some that no breakers were seen nor heard; but the fact is, they were inside the Barrier Reef, fringing the north-west coast of Australia, and of the existence of this Captain Cook was not aware.

The consternation and distress of the crew at this unfortunate termination to their voyage may be easily imagined. There could be no doubt that the ship had struck upon a very rough rock, and must be much injured, for every heaving of the waves let her down more heavily and firmly. The scene on board would have been one of utter confusion but for the firmness of Cook. Though as much dismayed as any one, and knowing well that if the ship were wrecked upon that coast their lives would be forfeited to a certainty, he still kept a calm demeanour. He ordered the sails to be taken in, and the boats to be lowered, to sound in the

neighbourhood. The danger was really very great. It was found that the vessel had been lifted over a ledge of rock, and lay in a hollow within it, having in some places but a few feet of water near her, and in others three or four fathoms. The bumping caused by the swell was doing immense mischief. At first, little pieces of wood came floating up to the surface; then planks from the sheathing, and finally the false keel lay alongside, plainly telling the crew that there was only now a plank or two between them and eternity. There was no time to be lost. Everything which could be spared —guns, fresh water, refuse stores—all went overboard, in their efforts to lighten the ship. The first tide did not, however, float her, even with the assistance of purchase anchors. In the meantime the leak gained ground. The water was rushing in fearfully, and there was every probability that if the vessel were afloat she would soon fill and sink. Just as they were almost despairing they tried the expedient of a sail fastened under the ship's bottom, covered with wool and oakum. It succeeded perfectly, and by the night tide the vessel was afloat again.

They now stood for the land. It became absolutely necessary to examine the leak, and this could only be done by hauling the ship down in some convenient cove or harbour. This they found close within some islands near, which Cook, for obvious reasons, had named Hope Islands. The harbour was a most convenient one, and they soon ran out their anchors, and had the ship high and dry upon the beach. Then the cause of their preservation became known. On examining the bottom they found a large hole through the planks into the hold, and this was filled up nearly by a fragment of coral nearly half a yard square. If this fragment, after making the hole, had not almost plugged it up, the leak would have been sufficient to sink the ship, if she had had eight pumps instead of four.

The scurvy began at this time to make sad work among Cook's men, so that his first care was to build a tent, to serve as a hospital for the sick. After this, while the vessel was being repaired, some examination

was made of the country around. This was the only recorded visit to the north-east side of tropical Australia, and therefore everything the explorers saw possessed an extraordinary interest for them. First, the size of the bats, or flying foxes, as the settlers now call them, attracted the attention of all. Their size was so large, and their appearance so hideous, that a sailor who had found one ran back in great consternation, and reported that he had seen the devil! Next, the enormous size of the shell-fish upon the coral reefs filled them with wonder, as well it might, for the dimensions of the *Chama gigas* in that locality are so great that two men could scarcely manage to lift one. The kangaroo was seen here too for the first time. The explorers were very much puzzled to say what sort of an animal it was, for it fairly beat their greyhound by jumping over the long grass, exactly as a jerboa would have done under similar circumstances. At length one was caught, examined, cooked, and found to be good eating.

Several excursions were made inland by Mr. Banks and his party. For about nine miles the country was nothing but mangrove swamps and marshes, and then it became very much like what they had seen before. The soil was very rich, and supported a most dense and luxuriant growth of tussack grass, which almost hid the men one from another as they journeyed through it. They could see no natives at first, though they came upon many of their camps, which had been only recently deserted: the savages seemed very anxious to avoid communication. But this was not always the case: they soon came down to watch the crew, and, finding no violence offered to them, came nearer and nearer. At last, a few of them ventured to approach the camp. They were fed and well treated. This brought numbers of savages flocking round them, until every day there was an exchange of civilities with them, and presents were freely taken. This was all very well for a time; but these savages got rather troublesome. At first, they wanted presents which could not conveniently be spared; then they took to

stealing. One day, however, this unsatisfactory state of things was brought to a close by an open rupture. About twelve of them came on board, and asked for a turtle which was lying on the deck. This was refused. They repeated their demand in the most imperious manner, and were again quietly refused. They attempted to take it by force, but finding themselves overpowered, they jumped over the ship's side, and paddled away to shore in the greatest indignation. As soon as they arrived at where the men were working, they set fire to the grass, and before the explorers could interfere, the long dry herbage burned so rapidly that a great many things of value were destroyed. Such a gratuitous piece of mischief deserved some punishment, and accordingly, while the natives were dancing and yelling over the destruction in the greatest exultation, their thoughts were suddenly diverted into another channel, and their dancing much aided by some small shot fired at their legs. Cook says, that had the fire happened a few days sooner, it would have found their powder ashore, and the consequences would have been most disastrous. Certainly any one knowing anything of Australia, where the grass will generally burn like tinder, would not have put powder there.

In the meantime the ship was completed, and it became an important question how to get her outside the shoals upon which she had struck. The master was sent to examine, and he reported that they were inside a barrier reef, which did not seem to have any opening for many miles either way. The only course now was to proceed northward, and examine for a passage that way in the ship, but keeping the boat ahead, sounding. The mainland to the northward of their harbour was observed to be low, and chequered with white sand and green bushes, beyond which it seemed to rise considerably inland, rugged in outline and densely clothed with trees. Near an island, named Eagle Island, it was thought that an opening would be perceived. The master went forward to examine it, and returned to the ship with the news that she could get outside. The passage was merely discernable by a blank in the long

line of surf which fringed the exterior of the reef; but even in this blank there were some small breakers and much foam. Still the ship steered boldly through the passage, and as soon as she got outside the breakers into the open ocean, no bottom could be found within 150 fathoms of line. There was a heavy sea rolling in a long swell from the south-east, a certain sign that few rocks or shoals were now to be found beyond.

This was a happy change for the crew. For three months they had been entangled by these shoals, and often obliged to anchor within hearing of the surf which broke over them, knowing that if a tropical squall came they must all inevitably perish. But now, for the first time, they were enabled to proceed without having a man in the chains heaving the lead. Cook was delighted to be once more in the open sea, and congratulated his officers on the subject; but his triumph was only very short: he had scarcely proceeded two miles to the south-east when it fell calm, and the long round swell began to take them back to the reef. Evening came on, but they could not anchor. All night long they were doomed to hear the awful roaring of the surf sounding nearer and nearer, and when the day broke they saw it foaming to a vast height, not more than a mile distant. The distress of the crew may be imagined, as they were utterly helpless. There was not a breath of wind, and anchoring was out of the question. For a long time they tried to tow the ship off with the boats, and despair gave the men an energy which almost made them able to contend with the current. At last, hope dawned upon them: an opening was seen, and every effort made to try to reach it; but the ship obstinately drifted by. Another was seen further on, and as they had a chance of passing through this, the boat was sent forward to examine it. Scarcely had it been signalled as safe, when the ship was drawn towards it slowly by the current. Nearer and nearer came the huge white walls of surf, faster and faster flew the ship. The noise grew awful, and with the speed of lightning the vessel dashed through the narrow channel, with destruction almost touching her at either side. The danger was

soon passed, and her speed was slackened in a quiet, calm expanse of green water. Fancy the relief of the crew as they heard the chain run out, and knew they were at anchor in a few fathoms of water. The opening through which they came was called Providence Channel—as well it might be; a bay on the mainland in front of them was called Weymouth Bay. It was in sight of this bay and channel that, nearly eighty years afterwards, the majority of poor Kennedy's party were starved to death.

Cook now resolved not to leave the mainland until he definitely ascertained whether or not Australia was joined to New Guinea. He therefore continued close along the coast. Forbes Island, and Cape Grenville, Temple Bay, and the large clusters of islands round Cape York were successively passed and named, and at last he reached the extremity of the continent. That it was not joined to New Guinea, Cook saw with delighted eyes, and thus he discovered the straits of Torres a second time, after the first discovery had been allowed to sleep in oblivion for nearly 170 years.

After standing N.N.E., between many shoals and islands, they passed through a channel one of whose sides seemed the most northerly promontory of the mainland. This was named Cape York; a few islands near were called York Islands. The channel began to widen, and the islands on each side were distant about a mile. The mainland stretched away to the south-west, and they could see no land to the west. This made them begin to hope that they had at last found a passage to the Indian seas. That he might be able to determine this with more certainty, Cook resolved to land upon the island which lay upon the south-east part of the passage, which seemed to have a great many inhabitants upon it. Dr. Solander and Mr. Banks, as usual, went ashore with the captain. There were ten natives upon the beach—nine of them were armed with the usual spears, and the tenth had a bundle of arrows and a bow, which Cook remarks he had never seen with the savages upon the mainland. This confirms the view that Torres saw only the island in his passage

through. Two of the natives had large ornaments of mother-of-pearl hanging round their necks, and all seemed to wait the arrival of the boat, as if determined to oppose the landing. They did not, however; but as it came near the shore they walked leisurely away. Cook immediately climbed the highest hill upon the island, which was not more than about 300 feet high. From it he saw all he wanted to see—small as the view was—and that was that the passage through to the westward was quite clear.

The island was very barren, and the land to the north-west consisted of a great number of islands, of various extent and different heights, ranging one behind the other as far as the eye could see, a distance of about forty miles. As Cook was now about to quit the coast of New Holland, which he had coasted along from lat. 38° to this place, he took formal possession of it in the name of his Majesty King George III., by the name of New South Wales. This ceremony was concluded by firing three volleys of small arms, which were answered by the same number from the ship; and though due weight must be given to such a proceeding, it should be remembered that very likely the same thing had been done before by Portuguese, Spaniards, and Dutchmen. The island was named Possession Island; the other islands near were not named. As the boat returned to the ship, a good deal of smoke was seen rising from various parts of the coast. These were probably signal fires. It will be seen as this work proceeds that this is a very common method with the natives for either gathering the scattered members of the tribe or giving warning that strangers are upon their land.

After visiting this island, Cook made no more explorations in connection with Australia. He proceeded on his voyage towards New Guinea, and there we lose sight of him for the present.

CHAPTER III.

SETTLEMENT OF SYDNEY.

French expedition, under Captain Marion, in 1772—Furneaux in 1773—Cook in 1777—Settlement of Sydney by Governor Phillip in 1788—Examination of Botany Bay—La Perouse—Sydney Cove—Broken Bay—Discovery of Pittwater—Lansdown, Carmarthen, and Richmond Hills—Head of Sydney Harbour—Belle Vue—The Hawkesbury—Lieutenant Dawes tries to reach the Blue Mountains—Other attempts—Vancouver discovers King George's Sound in 1791.

It can easily be imagined what effect the narrative of Cook's voyages had in Europe. The French soon caught at the idea of investigating these strange regions, and acquiring new empires in the South Seas; and to show their activity, Captain Marion was, in 1772, despatched to examine further the southern continent. He arrived in Tasmania the same year, with the ships *Mascarin* and *Castres*, and anchored in Fredrik Hendrik Bay, upon the south coast. The visit is chiefly memorable from a fatal collision with the natives, who, according to the French, manifested uncommon ferocity. The account of it is as follows:—Captain Marion, as he rowed ashore, noticed a great number of savages upon the beach; but as they were not armed, he did not apprehend any danger. As he landed they gave him a fire-stick, which he supposed was a token of friendship. He did not exactly know what to do on his part with the peace-offering, but, supposing that he must do something, he lighted a fire of wood with it. Upon this they very quietly retired to a hill, and commenced showering spears and stones upon the French. These in return fired their muskets, and the natives fled. Upon pursuing them into the wood the natives found a dying savage, one of the first victims of European intrusion into this coun-

try. We must believe, however, that Marion and his companions had great provocation, for they were nearly all slightly injured by the missiles, and a black servant was severely wounded by a spear.

The remarks made by Marion upon Tasmania are of no great value. He entered into the country, and saw the marks and ravages of bush fires everywhere. This, he supposed, was intended to drive wild animals from the coast. Though in a forest, he could not discover materials suitable for a mast which he wanted; and he was unsuccessful in his search for water. A small map, which sketched the form of this coast with considerable exactness, accompanied the account of this voyage. They tended to awaken the French to the importance of these seas, and led to several subsequent voyages.

The next visit to Australia was that of Captain Furneaux, in 1773. He accompanied Captain Cook in his second voyage, and commanded the *Adventure*, while Cook commanded the *Resolute*. On their voyage towards the South Pole the vessels were separated; and while Cook steered to New Zealand, Furneaux directed his course to Tasmania, the coast of which he reached on the 9th March.

The morning of the 10th was fine and calm, and showed them a high, bold coast, with occasional steep cliffs of rugged rock, but generally covered with the dense forest, whose blackish foliage gives such a sombre character to Australian scenes. The cutter was sent on shore to see if there was any good bay, but the surf upon the coast, as seen from the ship, seemed to show that there was not. The crew landed with much difficulty, and saw several places where the natives had been, for there were extinguished fires with a great number of shells around them. The soil seemed very rich; the country was thickly clothed with fine timber, particularly on the inland side of the hills; and there was plenty of water, which fell from the rocks in beautiful cascades, 200 or 300 feet perpendicularly into the sea. But they could find no anchorage. They then made sail for Fredrik Hendrik Bay, of the Dutch. In coasting along they saw shore of the most bold and

rugged description without an opening, but exposed to the heavy beating of the full swell of the Southern Ocean. The rocks were of a very dark colour, but the grassy patches on their summits were of a bright green, and afforded a most agreeable contrast. Three of them which stood out from the shore more boldly than the rest were named the Friars. A little beyond this was an opening, and Furneaux mistook it for Tasman's Bay, and steered into it. A short search showed him all that he wanted: there was a most excellent harbour within, with clear ground from side to side of it. Here he anchored, in seven fathoms, completely land-locked between Tasman's Head and Maria Island, and Penguin Island. While they lay here they saw several clouds of smoke and large fires to the northwards, apparently about eight or ten miles in shore; but no natives came upon the coast while they remained. It was evident, however, that they did frequently come to the seaside, for there were plenty of their huts found in various places, like scattered camps, where they had made fires. They seemed to be ignorant of every kind of metal; for their huts were made of boughs either broken or split. The larger ends of these were stuck in the ground in a circular form, and the thin ends were tied together at the top; the whole was then covered with ferns and leaves, but in so imperfect a manner that it would scarcely afford any shelter from the wind. It may be remarked here, too, that though the natives were so different from the Australians, they made their huts in very nearly the same manner. In the middle of the hut was the fireplace, surrounded with heaps of mussel, pearl oyster, and scallop shells, for shell-fish were the chief food of the Tasmanians—I say were, because the race is now extinct. They slept on dried grass round the fire, and their houses seemed only constructed for a few days. There were never more than two or three huts in the same place, each capable of containing three or four persons. It was rather remarkable that Furneaux's party saw no signs of boats or canoes; neither was there the least indication of any metal, although he thought the country, in other respects, as good as any in the world.

Intending to coast along until he came to the latitude of Cook's discovery, Furneaux sailed past Maria Island, and he hoped by this means to ascertain whether or no Tasmania were joined to Australia. The country inland appeared to be very well inhabited, for there was a continual line of fires as they sailed along. The aspect of the coast was pleasant, being low and even, but no place where he could conveniently send a boat ashore to make another attempt to find the inhabitants. By-and-by, the coast became very rocky, and the numerous islands around it obliged him to haul further off the shore. Its aspect seemed to change, as well as he could judge from a distance. High, bold mountains rose inland, many peaks and blue ranges seemed to show that the surface was very undulating; but the islands were of the most barren description, generally granite rocks, with hosts of mutton birds upon them.

When Furneaux reached the latitude of 39° 50′, he expressed his opinion that Tasmania and Australia were joined, but that there was a deep bay between them. He then left the coast, for the wind having shifted he thought it best to proceed to New Zealand to meet Captain Cook, according to previous arrangement. It is a pity that he did not try to go to the bottom of this deep bay between Australia and Tasmania. It would have taken him home again, for apparently he was not a very enterprising man, nor one that was exactly fit for voyages of discovery.

For the next four years the Australian seas were without a visitor. There were only two Powers from whom voyages of discovery would be then likely to emanate—the English and the French, and they were both otherwise engaged during the intervening years. The French were undergoing the last stages of that political and social convulsion which was to burst forth in the Revolution. The English were engaged in the struggle with the American dependencies. It is strange that these things should make themselves felt in Australia; but it is quite certain that the latter retarded the colonizing of New South Wales for nearly twenty years. But there was always interest enough felt in

Cook's voyages to equip fresh ones under his command, even in the most troublous times. We find him accordingly afloat again, and in January, 1777, visiting Tasmania. He sighted land between South Cape and Tasmania Head, and anchored the same day in Adventure Bay—the one recently discovered by Furneaux. Next morning a party was sent ashore, and for the first time since any navigation had touched these shores, friendly intercourse was established with the natives. They were different from the Australian savages, being shorter in stature, a little lighter in the colour, and with short, crisp woolly hair, instead of the long, flowing raven locks of the latter. They wore, loose round their necks, three or four folds of small cord made of fur, and others had a narrow strip of kangaroo skin tied round their ankles. Some wore whole kangaroo skins round their waists, and over their shoulders; in the latter case to support children who were thus carried about. The skins were untanned, and they were the only articles of clothing worn. The bodies of both men and women were much scarred, and the heads of the latter were entirely or partly shaved, sometimes leaving a ring of hair round the brows, very much resembling the tonsure of monks. They had no weapons but short sticks, when they first came to see the navigators, and on being shown the effects of a gun-shot, they ran into the woods with the greatest precipitation.

Cook found the land of Adventure Bay to be high, and besides being very diversified with beautiful hills and valleys, was delightfully verdant. It was well wooded, so that the officers and men spent the time pleasantly enough amid the gigantic forest. Abundance of water was also procurable, and Cook having spent a week in supplying his immediate wants, sailed away to New Zealand; destined, however, never to see England again.

After Cook's time, a long and dreary interval ensued, which was to be the introduction to days of activity and stormy enterprise. On this hitherto deserted land civilization was about to come at last, and the prelude of eleven years, during which no one visited these shores,

seems like the quiet of the dawn which precedes a summer's morning. When at last these years were gone, and the savages had either forgotten the visit of the whites, or it had become strangely distorted as a legend for their moonlight dances, a strange sight broke upon their view one hot summer's morning in January. Yes, in January, mind, for we are dealing with the antipodes; and those whose only idea of January warmth is in connection with thickly covered beds and blazing fires, must remember that in January, Australia glows with a fiery heat, presenting a copper coloured sky, and an arid soil as a back-ground to every landscape. Well, in this January, 1788, a great sight broke upon the view of the Botany Bay tribe. Ships they had perhaps seen before; but so many sailing in at once, and such large ones, was more than they had ever seen. Australians are not in the habit of troubling themselves much about anything; but in this instance it appears they laid aside their apathy, and took up their spears. For not only were ships anchoring in their bay, in number beyond all precedent, but boats were descending, and seemed determined to possess the land, while the ships possessed the water. The first boat came nearer and nearer, and all the crew made such demonstrations of peace and good intentions, that they forgot their right to the land; forgot the legend about the small shot in their countryman's legs, and fraternized with the intruders. The leader of the company, who stood before them in the full splendour of naval cocked-hat and gold braid, was no less a person than Captain Phillip, or Governor Phillip, who was charged by the Home Government to take away the land from the blacks, and give it to the men he had with him; who were principally sent out from England, because they would not let other people's property alone. It was thought that they would thus reform.

The expedition was a very large one; it consisted of 1000 souls, with suitable stores for the bodies, all packed up in three men-of-war, six convict ships, and three store ships. The colonists were selected in the most miscellaneous manner. Some, probably the majority, were political offenders, or sent out for offences of so slight a nature

that society would have risked nothing by keeping them at home. Others were desperate characters, rendered still more desperate by the prospect of flogging or the gallows before them for the slightest fault. Our business does not lie with them, however, so we leave them peering with longing eyes through loopholes and cracks at the virgin forest which is to be their home, while the governor has the trying task of looking for a suitable place to settle upon.

The first examination of Botany Bay elicited very unsatisfactory results. It was recommended by Cook and others, but they had not looked upon it with the eyes of men choosing a home. It was extensive enough as a bay—too extensive, in fact, for it did not afford a shelter from easterly winds, and what made this worse was, that ships would always be obliged to anchor a long way out, because the water was so shallow. Fresh water was abundant, for in the northern part of the opening there was a small stream, George's River. But they would never think of building a town upon it. It was so narrow that it would scarcely allow a small boat to pass, and the banks upon either side were a perfect morass. The western side of the bay was better, but there was no fresh water at all in that direction.

It was evident, then, that they dare not disembark in Botany Bay. Governor Phillip was an energetic man, one well fitted for the task he had to perform. He was not, therefore, at a loss. He ordered the ships to remain as they were, while he went round the coast in an open boat to see if a better port could not be found. The coast, as he drew near Port Jackson, wore a most unpromising appearance: the natives stood upon the tops of the cliffs, and warned the boats off with shouts of defiance; but the governor kept on. Soon he saw the opening, and passed under a stratified cliff of sandstone, some 300 feet high, descending into deep water. There was another head to match it on the other side, and when he had passed between these, and left the noise of the booming breakers far behind, a beautiful and tranquil scene broke upon his delighted gaze. It seemed like a gigantic lake, but so run in with estuaries

and little islets as to appear great only from the countless variations of scenery. This was Port Jackson. Still it was a question where he should land his crew among the many little bays about. The place was soon decided upon, and it received the name Sydney Cove, after Thomas Townshend Viscount Sydney, one of the members of the younger Pitt's administration.

It took three days for the governor to complete all his explorations, and he returned to the ships. Directions were at once given for an immediate removal to Sydney Cove. This removal would have taken place the day following, but for a singular circumstance. About daylight, just as they were preparing for a start, there were cries that two strange sail were in the offing. The sight of the phantom ship could not have created greater astonishment than these ships bearing into the bay. There they were, sure enough, and what was still more singular, they showed French colours. While conjecture was busy among the colonists, it was busy enough on board the French ships too. Travelling alone through the wide extent of these pathless seas, where every week showed them new variations of vast unreclaimed solitude, it was certainly a matter of astonishment to find many ships at anchor in the midst of the loneliness. Scarcely were the anchors down, when boats put off, and mutual explanations followed upon both sides. Governor Phillip learned with surprise that the vessels before him were the French exploring vessels, *Bossole* and *Astrolabe*, then upon a voyage of discovery, under the command of the unfortunate La Perouse.

After a mutual exchange of civilities, both parties proceeded to the work they had in hand; the English to settle down upon their home at Sydney Cove, the French to provide themselves with wood and water from Botany Bay. By the beginning of March the governor had got things a little settled. The ground had been cleared, and the work of storehouses and other buildings begun. All this was not easy. The work of felling gigantic gum trees was in itself a fearful task, and to remove them afterwards and grub the stumps required the labour of all their men for weeks together. It might

have been done quicker and better by regular labourers, but with convicts not much could be accomplished. When things began to look a little orderly, and the sickness which raged among them had begun to abate, the governor went with the long boat and cutter on an excursion to Broken Bay. This was found to be very extensive. After rowing about it until evening, the party landed upon a rocky point on the north-west side, and there passed the night. This point was chosen as a place of security, for the natives, though friendly, were rather too numerous to be trusted. On the day following the boat continued her course. The water got very shallow until they passed a bar which their small boats could scarcely float over. They then entered a very extensive branch with deep water, out of which the tide came so strongly, that the boats could scarcely make headway against it. This opening appeared to end in several deep inlets, which there was not sufficient time to examine, as the boat had much difficulty in finding a channel amid the banks of sand and mud. Leaving this north-west branch, they went across the bay into another which ran south-west. This was also found to be very extensive, and from it ran a second opening to the westward, affording good and extensive shelter. Continued rains prevented the party from making a survey of their discoveries upon this expedition; more especially as the land was much higher here than at Port Jackson; was more rocky, and equally covered with timber. Above them soared the Blue Mountains in huge, precipitous walls of red sandstone, crowned on the summit with trees, and apparently quite inaccessible. Upon the south side of the bay there was a headland, which seemed to obstruct the view, but on rounding it, the finest harbour of all was discovered, and it received the name of Pittwater. But all these harbours were rendered comparatively useless by the bar which stretched across the entrance. The land was pretty good all round, and well watered; one spring forming a beautiful cascade over the rocks into the sea. In this excursion a good many interviews with the natives took place, and it was for the first time observed that some of the women

had lost the first two joints in the little finger of the left hand.

On the 10th March, M. De La Perouse sailed away from the shores of Australia. He had shown the greatest courtesy to the settlers, though in the latter part of his stay he was almost every day harassed with run-away convicts, who entreated to be taken on board the ships. They were always sent back to the settlement, and there punished with a pain, more acute, but less lasting than the disappointment of the hopes of home and liberty. Before La Perouse left, M. Le Receveur, a Franciscan priest, who was naturalist to the expedition, died, and was buried in Botany Bay. He was the only one of the ill-starred expedition who left his bones among Christian people. The fate of the others is now well known, though it remained a mystery for many years; but after leaving Botany Bay not one of them was ever after seen alive by Europeans.

On the 15th March, Governor Phillip went again exploring. This time he went round the head of the harbour. He found that at first it was very low and marshy, until a large lagoon was met with. The land then began to rise, but became very rocky and barren. The hills were covered with a low shrubby underwood, which was very pretty, inasmuch as it was in flower; but it presented great difficulties in ascending and descending the undulations of the ground. At a distance of about fifteen miles from the sea coast, a very pretty hill was ascended, and from it there was a fine view of the mountains and the inland country. The most northerly mountains he called Carmarthen Hills, and the most distant southerly, Lansdown Hills; and to some that were intermediate, he gave the name of Richmond Hills. From the manner in which these mountains appeared to rise, it was thought almost certain that a large river must descend from among them, but they could not then pursue their examination further.

On the 22nd, another expedition of the same kind was undertaken. The governor with his party landed near the head of the harbour, where some good land appeared, but it did not continue long. In a very short

time they arrived at a dense scrub of low underwood. A long time was spent in trying to force a way through it, but all in vain, and finding it impenetrable they were obliged to return. Next day they found a way round the scrub, and continued their course westward. The country improved rapidly upon this course; it was beautifully grassed and timbered, and besides having a rich soil, was gently undulating. The further they went, the more the country improved, but they could not reach the Blue Mountains as they intended. While they were still thirty miles from them, the provisions failed, and they were obliged to retrace their steps. The furthest point reached was named Belle Vue, because of the beautiful prospect it afforded. Water was found in abundance everywhere upon the road. The extraordinary difficulty of penetrating into this sort of country had now been fully experienced. The deep ravines of the Blue Mountains had begun to show how impassable they were, especially when assisted by the dense thicket which grew about them. The utmost extent of this excursion, in a direct line, had not been more than thirty miles, and it had taken up five days.

It was still the general opinion, that the appearance of the country promised the discovery of a large river in that district whenever the line now taken could be freely pursued. Another expedition was therefore planned, in which it was determined to reach either the Lansdown or Carmarthen Hills. Some circumstances deferred this expedition for a time, and meanwhile the governor went overland to Botany Bay. This journey resulted only in discovering some few hills which lay between the two places. Again the governor was astir, soon after his return on the side of Broken Bay. This time he discovered a large fresh-water river from the westward, which emptied itself into Broken Bay; this he named the Hawkesbury. On the 14th July, he traced up the river for a considerable distance to the westward; in fact, he reached the Richmond Hills before the stream became too shallow for further investigation in the boat. The windings of the channel were beautifully picturesque, there being dense thickets which made a wall

of graceful foliage over the water, broken only by well-grassed hills. It was evident, too, that the Hawkesbury was liable at times to terrible floods. There were marks of such full forty feet above the water, and these were accompanied with signs of violence, which showed the impetuosity of the stream to have been very great. Not a nice place for a settlement, thought Governor Phillip, as he rowed home again, though his expedition had afforded him new and vast ideas of the fertility of the land of their adoption. His journeys were almost continuous; in fact, as long as there was a question unsolved, or a hill in sight which he had not visited, he was always exploring. The same restless craving for the unknown was shared by all his officers and men. There was never any difficulty in raising volunteers for an exploring party, no matter how great the fatigues to which they were sure to be exposed.

Early in the month of August, Lieutenant Dawes, with a small party, and a still smaller supply of provisions, set off, determined to reach the Blue Mountains. They reached first a branch of the Hawkesbury, which had been previously discovered by Captain Tench; but a little beyond this their progress was nearly stopped by very precipitous ravines. But still they struggled over them for a considerable distance. They desisted at last when only about eleven miles from the mountains. The difficulties were enormous; and even had they been less, the provisions he had with him would not have carried him further. Unpleasantly for him, his line of march was chosen right across a line of ravines and gullies.

This unfortunate termination to the expedition stopped for a time all further investigations. The officers had ascertained the nature of most of the country around them, and as for what was beyond, it was evident that no expedition could be undertaken with any chance of success unless it were upon a very large scale, and this they were not then in a position of affording. A momentary effort was, however, made in 1790, when some officers made an excursion in a direction south-west of Paramatta. They were absent six days, and reported having passed through a very bad country

intersected everywhere with deep ravines. This was the last effort for a time. In the meanwhile the settlement had gone on and prospered. It is true that provisions were scarce at times, and floggings and hangings became very frequent. Perhaps severity was the very condition of their existence; but Governor Phillip does not appear to have been over-endowed with mercy. While he was governor, a settlement had been made upon Norfolk Island; the founder of it was Captain Philip Gidley King. He had a son born to him at the island, who was afterwards the celebrated explorer and navigator, Rear-Admiral Philip P. King, whose doings will be spoken of in a subsequent part of this work.

In 1791, Captain Vancouver made some important discoveries upon the shores of Australia. In his voyage in that year he reached the south coast of Australia, not very far from King George's Sound. The first land he saw was a high mountain, which he named Mount Gardiner, and some islands off the mainland were called Eclipse Isles. The appearance of the shore was far from tempting. The country was wooded, but apparently very sandy, with here and there a huge granite rock protruding. But there seemed an opening leading up to a fine bay, and as the soundings were regular, Vancouver steered straight into it. Here the vessel was anchored in a well sheltered position, and the crew landed. Vancouver was easily pleased, it appears, for he described this country, which supported only a low, coarse vegetation, with thick brushwood, wiry grass, and stunted trees,* as good land, though certainly not of the best. He went along the shores of the Sound towards a high rocky point, named Point Possession, and on reaching its summit had an excellent view of the inlet in all directions. The surrounding country and its neighbourhood presented a far more fertile and pleasing aspect than had been before observed. Nearly in the centre of the sound was an island covered with a good deal of green herbage, differing in that respect from the islands around, which were mere barren rocks. The soil

* Darwin's Nat. Voyage.

of the island was red cliffs, near the sea; but still the whole aspect of the place was not pleasing. There was an approach to the picturesque in the way the sand-hills seemed heaving and rippling in the distance; there was even something wild and sombre in the thin wiry grass, or dense thicket of rushes with which they were covered; but it was a landscape which owed its principal beauty to the air of savage desolation about it. The trees and shrubs all bore the marks which showed them to have once borne the ravages of fire; indeed, it would be difficult to find a part of Australia where the timber does not bear such marks; but with this exception, neither Vancouver nor his companions were able to find any traces of the natives, nor any signs to show that they ever visited that locality. In sailing out of the sound, the boats grounded on a bank in a small cove which had been previously seen; it was covered with oysters, and this circumstance earned for it the name of Oyster Harbour. This completed Vancouver's discoveries upon this coast.

CHAPTER IV.

Explorations in Tasmania — Bligh — D'Entrecasteaux — The West Coast— Hayes in Tasmania — Sydney — Hacking's attempt to cross the Blue Mountains—Bass and Flinders—The explorations of the *Tom Thumb*— Bass's attempt to cross the Blue Mountains—River Grose—Mount Hunter —Bass's Straits discovered—Flinders and Bass sail round Tasmania.

WHILE Governor Phillip was exploring about Sydney, several visits were made to Tasmania, of which mention will now be made. Tasmania does not, properly speaking, belong to the limits proposed in this work; but at this time it was thought to be a part of Australia, and until Bass's Straits were discoverd, was intimately connected with the continent in every exploration that was made. It, therefore, becomes an important object to chronicle everything connected with its exploration, at least in this early period of Australian history.

In July, 1789, a visit was made to the Tasmanian coast by Captain J. H. Cox, of the brig *Mercury*. He entered one or two deep bays, not very far from Adventure Bay, and in an attempt to reach the latter, he discovered a new inlet, which he named Oyster Bay.

Captain Bligh, subsequently governor of New South Wales, and then commanding the ill-fated ship *Bounty*, touched at Tasmania, on his celebrated voyage to Tahiti. He visited the coast a second time, when in command of the ship *Providence*, in 1792. He anchored in both instances in Adventure Bay, and during his stay planted many fruits and vegetables.

In the meantime the French Government had become very anxious about La Perouse's expedition. Nothing had been heard of him since his visit to Botany Bay in 1788, and then he had been three years away from

home. Seven years had now elapsed, and still there were no tidings. The melancholy conclusion that he had been lost was pretty evident to the mind of everyone; but in answer to the general wish to have the matter cleared up, an expedition was fitted out, under the command of Admiral D'Entrecasteaux. There were two ships, the *Recherche* and *Esperance*; the former commanded by the Admiral, and the latter by Captain Huon Kermadec. The two vessels arrived off the coast of Tasmania in 1792, and on the 21st of April anchored off Storm Bay.

M. Labelladiere, the celebrated botanist, was the naturalist to the expedition, and he has left us the only account of the voyage which is now extant. This narrative is brief, and, unfortunately, instead of telling us what we all want to know under such circumstances, that is, about the appearance of the coast and the land, he falls to most needless discussions about magnetism, tides, and southernly winds. He tells us that the Admiral was afraid to anchor in Storm Bay at first, as he considered the place too exposed, but the vessels having found a little cove higher up, he took the ships into it. Their first care was to go fishing, and the immense quantity caught surprised as well delighted them. In this respect, as tastes differ, the quality must not be too closely scrutinized, for amongst the spoils were long blue sharks, which are, to say the least, somewhat coarse eating.

Round about the inlet huge mountains rose to an immense height, or stretched their vast, gloomy, thickly timbered gullies down into the sea beyond them. It was a lonely spot, broken by no sounds except those of the ships; for even the winds were enclosed so as not to blow with violence upon that sheltered basin. When they landed they were like all explorers in the same place, suprised and delighted with the immense size of the trees around them. The French botanist went into raptures of delight; he says, "that the eye was astonished with the prodigious height of the trees, some being upwards of 150 feet high; their summits crowned with perpetual verdure; several of them, falling from age,

found a support upon their neighbours, and fell to the ground only in proportion as they rotted. Most of the vegetation formed an admirable contrast with the state of decay." Above was life and vigour, strength and light; below was gloom and damp, death and decay, but it was Phœnix rising from the ashes—the decaying vegetation forming a vegetable mould of immense richness, which supported a thick undergrowth of young and healthy saplings.

This forest was not, however, so thick as to prevent them entering it. At first, the soil was marshy, but it became drier as they reached the sources of the waters which flowed down in rivulets from the mountain sides. Sometimes, however, the ground was found to be undermined with sunken ponds, and these were so completely covered over with moss, and overhung with long grass, that frequently the explorers only knew of their existence by actual immersion in them. These things, combined with the dense nature of the scrub and undergrowth of shrubs, rather confined the wanderings of the visitors, but they made several excursions into the interior while they remained.

On one occasion they passed through the forest until they arrived at a large plain which extended to the seashore. Here they spent the night, filling up the record of their adventures, not with descriptions of scenery, but with their fears of the natives. But they saw only one native during the whole time of their absence, and after two days' hard walking, they returned to their ships in safety. In the meanwhile an examination had been made of the inlet where the vessels were lying. A very little further on the east side of them there was a portion where the land did not close entirely round the water. An attempt to reach the bottom of this showed them that they were in a strait instead of a bay, and that while Adventure Bay was on an island, the bay in which they anchored ran between that island and the sea. A description of both the island and the strait will be worth the reader's attention.

The island is almost like two, united by a narrow isthmus which forms the shore of Adventure Bay. Both

north and south portions are extremely fertile, and now support a goodly number of inhabitants, with one or two little townships besides. Adventure Bay, it will be remembered, was discovered by Furneaux, and ever since had been the first point for explorers to visit. It is a very beautiful place, a fine sandy beach runs round it, and the forests are sublime from their magnitude. The strait which divides it from the main is perfectly marvellous for the singular beauty and wildness of its scenery. It has been often necessary to speak of the greatness of the trees, and the fine appearance of the forests, but in this strait they assume proportions and beauties which baffle description. It is not alone in the stately grandeur of the tall straight trunks, nor yet the rocky headlands which here and there jut into transparent water, and shade it with their verdure; but it is the grey or bluish-grey tint of the darkened atmosphere; it is the calm of the ocean, which, shut in between the abrupt mountains, lies still and pellucid as glass; it is, finally, the loneliness—the gloom of those vast mountain recesses on either side, into which man has not as yet penetrated—which make it so sublime with calm, mysterious splendour.

After many explorations and surveys in boats, the ships commenced to work down the strait, which was named D'Entrecasteaux's Channel. As they passed along, the crew saw two islands, one of which lay at the mouth of a fine broad river, as useful, apparently, for the purposes of navigation as it was beautiful. The river was named the Huon, and has since become celebrated for the production of a tree which yields the pretty cabinet wood, known as Huon pine. To the southward of the river was a deep and gloomy bay, named after one of the ships, Esperance Bay. A deep and long lagoon extends a long way beyond this island, and beside it another anchorage, which was called after the *Recherche*.

After leaving Tasmania, the vessels visited the west coast of Australia, and coasted along the south part in December of the same year.

The interior of the country, wherever they could see

it, was intersected by downs covered with sand, which exhibited an aspect of great aridity. Those to the southward, where the land was lower, were scattered about like so many islets, and the space between them was occupied by shrubs, but dark and gloomy looking in their foliage. There were rocks here and there starting up among the sandhills, so that very likely the latter were only covering others which served as a nucleus upon which the drift might collect. Behind this the mountains seemed to form a regular chain, but not, apparently, rising higher than about twelve hundred feet. They were not always as heavily timbered as other mountains; barren rocky spots were easily perceptible, and these were not only precipices, but places where evidently the soil was so poor and stony that nothing could grow upon it. The French also remarked that the mountains also appeared in several rows, rising like stairs one above another. Several other peculiarities were observed and set down by M. Labelladiere, who seems to have had an especial talent for noticing unimportant things, at least in Australia, and giving no place to features which we should like to see described. By the time the ships had reached longitude 119°, the coast headed regularly towards the east-south-east. Its sinuosities were now slight, and the capes small, none of them extending two miles into the sea. The swell of the ocean began also to make itself felt, and the huge rollers of the Southern Ocean could be perceived at a distance breaking over the outlying rocks, and sending their foamy wrath in white jets more than forty feet into the air.

The vessel continued coasting along for some days, until a storm drove them to anchor in Le Grand Bay, so called after a seaman who discovered it. This was in lat. 33° 55′, lon. 119° 32′. There they landed, because they were badly in want of water; but none was to be found on that sandy and desolate part of the coast. Whichever way they turned, nothing but glaring yellow hills of sand met them; and if there was any variation upon this, it was only because salt lakes occupied their place, or the sand was covered with a dark and dry kind of

coarse shrub. The shore was very much exposed to the winds, and whether there was wind or not, the swell which came in raised a surf which was prodigious. It was only on very favourable occasions that the boat's crew could land, and when they did, it was a matter of much greater difficulty to get off again in safety.

In the hope of finding some favourable place for watering the ships, they coasted along to long. 127°; but the appearance of the land went from bad to worse, and for the last few days the coast had been an unbroken line of cliffs 300 feet high, beyond which they could not see the slightest sign of available country.

On the 20th January, 1793, they sighted a new bay in Tasmania, which they named Rocky Bay—*quasi lucus a non lucendo*—because one of the vessels got aground, and did not touch upon a rock. The ships remained a month in Tasmania, and made many observations on the country. At this time Mount Wellington, as it was afterwards named, was covered with snow, and altogether the appearance of the country was by far finer than when they had visited it before. From a hill which they ascended, the explorers had an extensive view of the country around, on which many open plains and large lakes were to be seen. They had several interviews with the natives. One excursion was made to the summit of one of the spurs of Mount Wellington; it took them a long time to reach the top, but when they did a fine view of the coast line rewarded them. The day was far advanced when they sat on the top of the first hill, and when they started they expected to reach much further. There they perceived the whole extent of the valley which lay between them and the mountain which they at first intended to visit, the interval which separated them from it was about three-quarters of a mile, and this was occupied by a thick and dense forest, through which the long feathery branches of the bright green fern-tree could be seen. From this the great chain of mountains appeared to extend to a vast distance, in a direction from north-east to south-west. This expedition was fraught with so much difficulty in passing through the forests, that for the future they resolved to confine their exami-

nations to the coasts. It was then they discovered the Derwent River. They left Tasmania on the 28th of February.

The Derwent did not receive that name from D'Entrecasteaux; he called it the Rivière de Nord. It was Captain John Hayes, of the Bombay Marine, who changed the name. He visited the coast in 1794, and passed up D'Entrecasteaux's Channel, and examined Storm Bay; probably he did not know of the visit of the French; but whether he did or not, he re-named all the places which he saw, as if they had never been visited before. It was rather ill-advised for others to adhere to his names; the survey of the French was found to be far more correct than his most meagre and imperfect charts; and the new names contained such euphonious gems, as Flower Pots, Tinder-Box Bay, and the Oil Butts, which are still retained.

Let us now take another glance at the progress of the colony of New South Wales, which during all this time had been progressing rapidly, but, at the same time, not doing much to explore the country around. Settlements were increasing in number; that is to say, Sydney was the central depôt whence offshoots of towns and farms went out in every direction where the land was available. Paramatta had nearly as many inhabitants as Sydney, and all along the banks of the Hawkesbury farms and homesteads were springing up. The formerly deserted landscape was varied with many a curling wreath of smoke; the hitherto unbroken silence of the forest echoed with the noise of the axe, or the cracking of the teamster's whip. The natives, seeing the eagerness with which river-banks were taken up as settlements, made use of the knowledge to their own advantage. They offered, on certain conditions, to show where water could be found in abundance. They stated that at no very great distance from Botany Bay there was a large fresh-water river, which ran into the sea. This story was eagerly listened to, and the Government very soon equipped two soldiers, with provisions for a week, and directed them to follow the natives to ascertain the truth of the story.

They set off from the south shore of Port Jackson, accompanied by a native as a guide, who professed a knowledge of the country, and named the place where the river could be found. He repeated his story so often, and was so minute in his details, that very great expectations were formed of this expedition. It was all very well, however, as long as he was within the limits of the country of his own tribe; but as soon as he got beyond that, it was evident that he was quite astray, and had to trust to the soldiers to bring him back. This little incident is mentioned to show what little reliance can be placed upon the stories of the natives, and even in this early stage of this history it is as well to bear it in mind. Instances will frequently be given, in the course of these volumes, of much larger expeditions being undertaken on the strength of such information, and yet failing completely. The fact is, the more circumstantial the natives are in their accounts; the more they try to gain credence by a minute attention to detail in their narratives, the greater probability is there that they are entirely untrue. They generally know what one wants to believe, and frequently this information is even given by the questions they are asked, and they lie accordingly.

The distance penetrated by the soldiers on this occasion was about twenty miles south of Botany Bay, and they came to a large inlet of the sea, which seemed to form a harbour. The head of this they went round without discovering any fresh-water river near it. The country they described as high and rocky in the neighbourhood of the inlet, and this was supposed to be somewhere about Red Point. The native returned with the soldiers as cheerful and as well pleased as if he had shown them the finest river in the world.

All this time, however, the western mountains formed a barrier to much further exploration of the interior. We may be sure that many a longing eye was turned towards them; many a wistful look was given to that lofty barrier which seemed so easy, and yet which no one was able to reach. A seaman

from one of the transports made an attempt about this time, but returned unsuccessful. The man's name was Hacking, and he had been formerly quarter-master of the *Sirius*; but one cannot say whether his version of his travels was exactly true or not. He was absent seven days, and reported having penetrated further than any other European. He said that he had reached the mountain; that then his way lay over eighteen or nineteen ridges of high rocks; and that when he gave up any attempt to penetrate further, it was only because, he said, the same kind of obstacles lay in his way for a much greater distance. The summits of these rocks were, he said, of ironstone, large fragments of the same rocks lying in the valleys between, in which there were also pools of water. There were marks, too, he said, of hurricanes and storms which visited this locality, for the ground was strewn on every side with the branches of trees, which lay about in the greatest confusion on the side facing the south-east. The hills seemed interminable north and south, and to the west they rose like a wall. He saw but one native on the journey, who fled. There was nothing singular in that, because the wild natives do run from the whites when they are alone; but the singular part of the story is that a native should be there at all. But altogether it must be admitted that Hacking's tale looks very much like truth.

The next attempt to cross the Blue Mountains was made by one whose name has since become celebrated in connection with Australian exploration. This was Mr. Bass. He had, in 1795, arrived in the colony, on board the *Reliance*, to which ship he was a surgeon, and associated with him in the same vessel was a midshipman named Flinders. Both were enthusiastic on the subject of exploration, and it formed the constant topic of their conversation during all the spare time they had on board. Remembering how bitterly they subsequently suffered for their zeal, it is quite affecting to read of their early zest for discovery, and the great charm it seemed to possess for them. Their story, told in their own simple words, is a record of daring and

enterprise, which Australians treasure, and of which every Briton may be proud. I have preferred, in the narrative which follows, to use almost their own words, for I feel I could not improve upon it. Indeed, this is the classical ground of Australian exploration, and everything connected with it wears an aspect of such romantic interest that it seems almost a desecration to interfere with the little which remains to us on the subject.

On arriving at Port Jackson, in September, 1795, Flinders found that the investigation of the coast had not extended much beyond three harbours. Jervis Bay had been entered by Lieutenant Bowen, and Port Stephens had been recently examined by Mr. Grimes, surveyor to the colony, but the intermediate portions of the coast to the north and south were little further known than from the account given of them by Captain Cook.

Flinders burned to lift the veil of obscurity which still hung over the coast. He says he often talked over the matter with Mr. Bass, a man who was not to be deterred by any obstacles, and who would shrink from no danger. But they were quite powerless with no means at their disposal. They might urge upon the colonial government the importance of such undertakings, and we can readily believe they did so; but there was too much to be done at that time to the colony, and far too little money to do it; so to think of equipping exploring parties was out of the question. But Bass, it was said, would not let any obstacle deter him. He and Flinders bought a small boat for a large sum. It was only eight feet long, and the crew was a very little boy besides the proprietors. One would think that, with no other resources, this would not have raised their hopes; but it was precisely on these resources that they founded their first project.

One month after the arrival of the ship, they made their first expedition. A small sail was hoisted, which Flinders managed, while Bass steered, and the boy was kept to bale. They tacked to and fro about the harbour to test their sailing capabilities, and then stood

boldly out of the heads into the huge rolling swell of the ocean. The little *Tom Thumb*, for so they had named their craft, danced about like a feather on the ripple, and seemed no more than a mere bit of sea-weed upon the long rollers. Her sails hung idly flapping in the valleys between the swell, and when descending the crest of the wave the wind was enough to take her mast out; but she kept her way boldly, and in due course reached Botany Bay. Their first exploration was in ascending the George's River, which falls into that bay. They went up this about twenty miles beyond a point which Captain Hunter had named in his survey. They explored its windings, and found several patches of really good land among them. Having ascertained many particulars about the country around, they returned again to the sea, and got back safe and sound to Sydney.

The information supplied even by this little excursion was of great value, and it resulted in the flourishing settlement of Banks Town being formed upon the sides of the George a few months after. But we must admit that the adventurers owed a great deal to good fortune. Their success was quite a chance. Had a storm arisen even when they were on shore, so as to prevent them putting out to sea, they must have starved to death, or perished miserably from the natives. We shall see these risks more forcibly in the next expedition which was made by the *Tom Thumb*.

In the meantime the little vessel was laid up in ordinary for a short period. The *Reliance* was ordered on a voyage to Norfolk Island, and, as the surgeon and midshipman could not be spared from the ship, exploring had to be given over; but not for long. In March, 1796, the *Reliance* returned, and the *Tom Thumb* was again launched. The rumour about the large river to the south of the bay was still in their minds, and they thought it might yet be found to be true. Early in the morning of March 25, they sailed from Port Jackson, standing out to sea to wait for the sea-breeze. This took them far out, and when they tacked towards shore in the evening, instead of being

off Cape Solander; as they expected, they found that a southernly current had drifted them further down, to a place where it was impossible to land; so they had to remain all night at sea. There were some islands below them, which they tried to reach; but in doing so, saw a place where they could obtain water by swimming ashore with the cask. This was not a good place to land upon, so they preferred swimming in and out to their boat. Mr. Bass went on shore, and filled the cask. While getting it off, a surf arose further out than usual. This carried the boat before it on to the beach, so that there they were left high, but not dry, for their arms, ammunition, and clothes were thoroughly drenched and partly spoiled. It would not do to stay to dry them, because the natives might come, and they would be defenceless; so they emptied and launched the boat as quickly as possible, and then slowly rafted the things on board. It was late in the afternoon before everything was got off, and they then tried to reach the islands. It was not possible to land on either of them; but there were two larger ones lying near, and they went to them. These were also inaccessible, and, being now dark, the wet and hungry crew had to pass another cold night in the boat, with their stone anchor dropped under the lee of Red Point.

They would have returned on the 27th, but the sea-breeze was too strong for them to beat against. Two natives were seen on shore, who were hailed, and, to the gratification of the explorers, they replied in English. They told them that there was no water to be found on Red Point, but that there was a river a few miles further southward, where not only fresh water was abundant, but there were plenty of fish and wild ducks. They were natives of Botany Bay, and consequently, having been long in contact with the whites, they could be trusted with safety. The river, however, turned out to be a miserable affair. It was nothing more than a small stream, which descended from a lagoon under Hat Hill. It was so narrow and tortuous that even the *Tom Thumb* had a very great

difficulty in getting any distance up it. Their native guides, who had had free passages given them in the boat, now left them, and walked alongside in company with eight or ten strangers who had joined them. After rowing up the stream for about a mile, the adventurers began to be uneasy about the narrowness of the stream. The natives here had the reputation of being ferocious and cruel; and if they chose to be hostile now, it was quite evident they could easily destroy the boat's crew with their spears. But fresh water was wanted badly before they could think of returning. Besides this, their muskets and powder were wet, and it was better to make both serviceable before they provoked any hostility by trying to go back. After consulting together, they, with very great presence of mind, agreed not to show the slightest fear, but land among the savages, and whilst one engaged their attention, the other should dry the powder, and clean the muskets. This was undoubtedly the best course to pursue, and one worthy the attention of future explorers. Readers will see, in the course of this narrative, that the only way to disarm the cruel treachery of the Australian savages is, while taking every precaution against surprise, to show not the slightest fear of them.

Mr. Bass accordingly landed, and went among the savages, and endeavoured to occupy them by getting their assistance in mending a broken oar, while Flinders spread out the wet powder in the sun. This met with no opposition, for the natives scarcely knew what powder was; but when they proceeded to clean the muskets, they became so alarmed that the explorers were compelled to desist. On inquiring for water, they were told that there was none nearer than the lagoon; but as this was too far to go, after many evasions, they were shown a native well not very far from where they stood. Here the cask was filled, and the *Tom Thumb* turned again towards the sea without any opposition from its savage friends. By rowing hard they got a good many miles nearer home that night, and they dropped their stone kedge under a

range of cliffs more regular, but less high, than those near Hat Hill. At ten o'clock, the wind, which had been unsettled and driving electric clouds in all directions, burst out in a gale from the south. The intrepid navigators got up their anchor, and ran before it. In a very short time the waves began to break. The little bark was now in extreme danger. The night was dark, and the shade was increased by the cliffs which overhung their boat. Their course was taking them, perhaps, to new dangers, and the heavy, roaring surf which beat against the cliffs told them of their terrible fate if they attempted to look for shelter on shore. Mr. Bass kept the sheet of the sail in his hand, drawing in a few inches occasionally when he saw a particularly heavy sea following. Flinders was steering with an oar, and we can well believe what he tells us, that it required the utmost exertion and care to prevent the boat broaching to. This, he adds, would have sent them to the bottom in an instant. The task of the boy in baling was no easy one now, for every wave sent a fine portion of its foam over their gunwale. It was in the midst of such dangers as these that the *Tom Thumb* reached Sydney in safety. It had not done much on this expedition, except to teach the colonists what a treasure they possessed in the indefatigable courage and zeal for exploration of Messrs. Bass and Flinders.

Flinders was very busy with his duties after returning, and as Bass could not bear inaction, he started soon after his return with his two companions to explore the Blue Mountains. It has not exactly been ascertained how far he penetrated on this expedition; but he said he had ascended a very high hill, and from its summit had seen another range about forty miles distant, which appeared to extend north and south. This seemed quite impassable, and he therefore returned. In doing so he discovered the River Grose. About this time, also, Governor Hunter made an expedition along the course of the Nepean River; he discovered Mount Hunter, and the country immediately adjoining. Flinders, meanwhile, was occupied in a voyage to Furneaux's Islands.

In September, 1797, a small colonial vessel was carried off by convicts, and the search that was made for them led to some further discoveries upon the coast. Lieutenant Shortland was one of those sent after the runaways in an open boat. In returning, unsuccessful, he discovered a new port, named Port Hunter. It contained abundance of coal of excellent quality, quite accessible to the shipping.

Bass's name had meanwhile become so celebrated, that he could memorialize the Government for assistance with some chance of success; besides he had shown how very little assistance he required, and, therefore, it would be very unlikely that such modest requests as his would be refused. He asked for a whale-boat, and to be allowed to take as many volunteers as he could get for his crew from the King's ships. This was granted. He had no difficulty in finding eight men as a crew, and provisions for six weeks were very readily supplied. On the 3rd December he started.

As he sailed to the southward he clearly perceived that there was no chance of finding a large river until the line of the Blue Mountains had terminated. There seemed to a considerable probability that they would end before the coast trended to the south-west, because the more they ran to the southward the nearer they approached the coast line. At a point, named afterwards Point Bass, they seemed to terminate the base of the southern extremity of the chain he saw extended in a south-westerly direction, and afterwards appeared to turn north-westward again. Close under Point Bass there was a beautiful and spacious bay, surrounded by picturesque hills, and supplied by a fine river which ran into it. This bay was unfortunately found too shallow to be of much value, and was called, in consequence, Shoal Haven. After passing this bay, and giving it such examination as his means afforded, he discovered in succession three others: Barmouth, Jervis, and Twofold Bays. The latter he did not examine, for the coast now seemed to trend to the south-west, and he was burning to decide the great question whether or not Tasmania was united to Australia.

The coast trended to the south-west, as just observed, and it no longer bore the high and lofty character of the eastern side. When Cook had passed along the same part, his distance from the land, and the height of his vessel above the water, enabled him to discern something beyond the arid line of sandhills which backed the beach. But to the crew of the whale-boat nothing was on view but the sand, and the heavy surf which beat upon it. Still they kept on. The weather was extremely rough, and there was not a chance of shelter upon that shore, but there was an open sea before them, and every heavy roller which came from the west sent a thrill of pleasure through Mr. Bass, for he knew that the straits which bear his name were discovered. At last, higher land became visible; there was a fine promontory jutting from the coast, which received the name of Furneaux's Land. A search was immediately made for a convenient place to land, and while they beat backwards and forwards, scrutinizing each inlet, they observed men hailing them from the shore. They were not natives, for they were clothed; and as the boat neared them they were seen to be in the most emaciated condition. These were the convicts which had escaped with the boat from Port Jackson; they had intended to proceed to a wreck upon Furneaux's Islands, where they hoped to find sufficient plunder to support them for a while, and enable them to decide upon their further course. But they were unsuccessful in finding the wreck, and while they searched their provisions failed. A few of them made some excuse to land, and while the majority of their companions were ashore, made off with the boat and provisions. Ever since that time the men Bass found had eked out their miserable existence upon shellfish and sea-weeds, and some of their number had died, or were on the point of death. Bass, unfortunately, could do nothing to relieve them; he had overstaid his own time already, and there was little enough left of his provisions to carry the crew back to Sydney. He, however, took two sick ones into his boat, gave the others what he could, and told them to follow the coast line until he could send them assistance. I have not been able to learn

whether they were ever heard of subsequently, and as no further mention is made of them in any history of New South Wales, I presume they all perished.

Bass did not give a very favourable account of the country he had seen to the southward from Furneaux's Land, or as it has since been named Wilson's Promontory; he proceeded a little further westward, and discovered the fine harbour of Western Port; but the time and provisions at his disposal did not enable him to examine it closely. He then returned to Sydney, without, it is true, settling the question whether or no Tasmania was separated from Australia, but making sufficient observations to render it nearly certain that it was.

In consequence of Mr. Bass's report, a small decked vessel, named the *Norfolk*, was put under his command, in conjunction with Flinders, and they were directed to proceed to the south coast, and finish the exploration which had been begun in the whale-boat. The *Norfolk* sailed on the 7th October, and on the 11th anchored at Twofold Bay, which had been very imperfectly examined by Bass. They found the bay situate at the southern end of a chain of rounded hills which lie immediately behind it, and rose into high and rocky peaks; the shore was broken in a picturesque manner; there were little strips of beach broken up by steep cliff heads, and from them generally gullies arose which ran up into the hills as deep, dark green glens. These valleys seemed to be very fertile to our explorers, who now no longer straitened for room in a *Tom Thumb*, nor relying for their safety on one whale-boat, could luxuriate in extending their examinations of the surrounding country as much as they pleased. But beyond the valleys there was very little available land visible: the ground was much too stony to be good, especially on the higher parts; but it made up for its want of fertility by being picturesque. Both hills and vales were covered with fine trees and dense brushwood. In the south-west corner of the bay was a little inlet, which widened out and lay at the back of the beach like a lagoon. There the chain of hills too swept back some little distance, leaving an amphitheatre of fine grassy land, some eight

miles long, through which the inlet took a serpentine course. It terminated at last in marshes and lagoons, but the scenery even here was singularly beautiful around it, as seen from the neigbouring heights. The lagoons were salt, and directly the ascent of the mountain was commenced, the land became at first sandy, and then extremely stony and barren.

Leaving Twofold Bay, the sloop proceeded to the southward. On the 17th she reached a group of islands which must have been passed by Furneaux; they are now known as Kent's Islands, and consist of seven or eight low islets of granite covered with a dwarfish brushwood and diminutive trees. Their appearance from the sea is far from prepossessing. Not even sand covers the barren slopes of pink granite, which from a distance look like the stony slopes of irregular pyramids; the trees are few in number, and their dwarfed stature or deformed growth is quite in keeping with the dusty hue of their foliage.

Having passed Kent's Group, standing to the southward, the next morning Furneaux's Islands were in sight, and they rested that day at Preservation Island, which is one of them. Mr. Bass's next landing was on the southern end of Cape Barren Island—which was indeed barren; but it was, he remarks, very singular that in a place where food seemed to be scarce, the island should be thickly inhabited by a small brush kangaroo, and a new quadruped named the wombat, both of which are grass-eaters.

On the 4th November Tasmania was sighted, the north side, it should be remembered, which had never been seen before. It was a cape which was before them, the last and lowest part of a range which ran up from the coast to join a lofty chain of high mountains and seemed to extend far inland. The scenery was bold and picturesque, and had the usual characteristics of fine gloomy forests, spread out like a sable garment on the slopes of the hills. It was not until the afternoon that anything like an opening could be seen; they moved forward to examine it. It penetrated deeply into the shore, so they sailed on. Hills soon enclosed them on

every side, and brought them into close contact with slopes of those that were green and fertile. Soon the sloop was hurried on by the influence of a rising tide, and just as she was advancing into the harbour which lay before her, the water shoaled suddenly—and she struck. Fortunately the flood-tide soon dragged her across the bar, and she floated over into a splendid harbour; it was almost a complete basin. The shores were broken into points and projections, that looked like subdivisions of the main stream, and all were clothed with a beautiful and fresh verdure. The sun was down when they entered the bay, but the dusky twilight enabled them to anchor in perfect safety, and enjoy the beauty of the scene.

The fine harbour, and the river in which it was found to bend, were named Port Dalrymple, and the River Tamar. When the morning broke, the explorers were able to form a good idea how the basin was situate. It was the lowest part of a valley, lying between two fine chains of hills, which descended to the coast from piles of mountains lying further inland, whose irregular outline could only be dimly discerned. The valley varied very much in width; at times it joined a spacious and broad amphitheatre; or again, the mountains threw out promontories from their sides, which diminished the width to a mere gorge: thus the Tamar was found to be more like a chain of lakes than a river, but all the more picturesque and placid in its long reaches in consequence. Of the two chains of hills, verdant and well wooded as they were, one terminated in a point in the bay, the other came down to the sea five or six miles behind it on the west side. Thus the ends of the chains would be seen from the entrance, rising like swelling buttresses against the distant blue heads of the back mountains which rose over them in clusters. Twelve miles to the west of the port, the back land was high and jagged, showing spaces amid its forests here and there, and displaying hard, barren surfaces of granite rock. The country around was good, especially in the valley at the head of the stream; but at some distance further it became stony, and somewhat thickly wooded.

The aspect of the same locality is now somewhat different, as the site of the town of Launceston. The Tamar divides into two branches—the north and south-east. The city stands at the confluence of the two, at the side of a rough bold outline of rock, along which there is a gorge for the river to flow down. From this height one of the branch streamlets of the river appears like a lake, and the rock, dense forest, and foaming waters around, make a scene unequalled in all Australia.

On the 20th November, the *Norfolk* left Port Dalrymple, and proceeded to the westward, but the wind changing, they were driven back to Furneaux's Islands until the 3rd December. Their progress was slow, and, unavoidably, at too great a distance from the shore to form any just idea of the country; but what was seen of it was high and mountainous; the mountains formed into hummocks and low peaks, to which a few shapeless knolls added a singular appearance. The weather became, however, much clearer as they advanced, showing the shore to be rocky and wooded, down even to the water's edge. All that was visible inland was a high peaked mountain like a volcano, and a very singular table-land which lay beyond it to the westward. The promontory of the shore off this was named Table Cape.

The important question of the straits was not quite decided, as long as land was still to be found to the westward, and, therefore, appearances were now watched with no ordinary degree of interest. At noon, on the 4th, the furthest land to be seen to the west was a small flat-topped island, which was found to be connected with the mainland, and called Circular Head, and a near projection, of jagged appearance, Rocky Cape. Beyond this point there was nothing like mainland to be seen, but a long heavy swell came from the south-west, such as they had not been accustomed to before. It broke heavily upon a small reef lying off the point, and although it was likely to prove troublesome and dangerous, it was hailed with joy and congratulations. There could be no doubt about the truth now: they

had discovered a passage to the Southern Ocean, between Australia and Tasmania.

A cluster of islands at this point was named Hunter's Isles. Mr. Bass had landed on them, and returned with a boat-load of seals and albatrosses. He had been obliged to fight his way up the cliffs of the island amid seals who made no very great resistance, but were reluctant to move out of the way; but when he reached the top, the fighting was no joke: the albatrosses were sitting upon their nests, and, therefore, did their best to protect their young. They were so numerous, that it was almost impossible to walk upon the ground without treading upon them; but unless they attempted forcibly to remove them, they only snapped their bills at the passers-by. The species of albatross was white on the neck and breast, but partly brown on the back and wings. It was smaller than the great albatross of the South Sea. The seals were about the usual size, and bore a reddish fur, much poorer in quality than that taken from the seals of Furneaux's Islands.

The extreme north-west cape of Tasmania was found to be a steep head; and from its bold and forbidding character, the huge surfs which broke upon it, and the mists by which it was always surrounded, it was called Cape Grim. The principal mountain visible in the interior, behind the cape, was called after the vessel, as a memorial of the part she had taken in discovering this extreme region of Tasmania. The shore from Cape Grim to the southward consisted of black cliffs, at first high and unapproachable, but they gradually became lower and lower until they ended in a sandy beach which fronted the wooded inland like a rampart. This low description of land continued as the *Norfolk* sailed along, showing no break or inlet in the coast line, nor any prominent object in shore. Two mountains only were seen on the 11th December, and as these were the first signs of land seen by Tasman, they were named Mounts Zeehaan and Heemskirk, after his two ships. The crew of the *Norfolk* had no object now but to get round to the other side of the island to make further observations. There was no

inlet of any kind upon the west side, and even if there had been, it had been many times visited before, so that mere curiosity was not thought a sufficient cause to keep the small sloop close upon a lee shore.

On the morning of the 12th they saw the tops of the mountains which Tasman had erroneously named De Witt's Isles, as he was too far off to distinguish the connecting land. Flinders named the highest of them Mount De Witt. After passing several places of smaller note, the *Norfolk* entered Headsman's Cove, a little inlet at the mouth of the Derwent. Beyond this the crew proceeded in the boat, imagining that one tide would enable them to reach its source. Scenes of surpassing beauty struck their gaze at every fresh bend of the river. On either side were gentle grassy slopes, slightly timbered with graceful acacias, and occasionally embellished with splendid flowery shrubs. Behind these park-like lawns rose gloomy forests, swelling into mountains here and there, and sending up a grey peak of craggy stone into the clear blue air. The river was fresh and placid, containing abundance of fish; and what surprised the explorers most was, that amid all this abundance and charming beauty, combined with utility, they saw no signs that it was made use of. It was, in fact, a paradise in solitude.

On the 3rd January the *Norfolk* left the Derwent, and after sailing along a coast already well described, they reached Sydney on the 12th of the same month. After mentioning the discovery of the strait between Australia and Tasmania, the latter place will not come again within the scope of this work, except presently in connection with its first settlement. In parting with it, the perusal of Colonel Collins's observations on the south coast are worthy of consideration, to contrast with what has been just narrated about the north side. It should be remembered, too, that it is the barrier which saves the south-eastern extremity of Australia from the wasting of the Southern Ocean. Its form, therefore, has materially influenced our southern geography, and its geology probably supplies many lost clues to the larger continent. Like Terra del Fuego, says Colonel Collins,

the extremity of Van Diemen's Land presents a rugged and determined front to the icy regions of the south pole; and, like it, seems once to have extended further south than it does at present. To a very remarkable elevation is added an irregularity of form which justly entitles it to rank among the foremost of the grand and wildly magnificent scenes of nature. It abounds with peaks and ridges, gaps and fissures, that not only disdain the smallest uniformity of figure, but are ever changing shape as the point of view shifts. Beneath this strange confusion, the western part of this waving coast-line observes a regularity quite as remarkable as the wild disorder which prevails below. Lofty ridges of mainland are bounded by tremendous cliffs, which project two to four miles into the sea; and these occur in great regularity about every two and a half miles.

We now take leave of Tasmania. One of the great problems of Australia was settled; and when it was known to be an island, the voyage to Sydney from England was very much shortened. It should be mentioned, however, that Bass and Flinders put to proof only what others had guessed. Both Cook and D'Entrecasteaux thought there was a strait between, but in the latter case the surmise was not published until long after the discovery was made.

CHAPTER V.

Flinders' explorations in Moreton Bay—Harvey's Bay—Grant's discoveries in the *Lady Nelson*—Mount Gambier and Mount Schanck—Cape Northumberland—Cape Bridgewater—Portland Bay—Cape Otway—Islands in Bass's Straits—Hunter's River.

SINCE the time of Cook, nothing had been done to survey the north part of the east coast. Sydney ships had gone near parts of it in many places, and something of the dangerous navigation of the coral reefs was already known, but of the actual coast line next to nothing. It should be remembered that Cook did not see more than half of it, if he saw so much. During the night he continued on his course, and in consequence saw nothing, and during the day was obliged very frequently to stand off the shore. It became very necessary, therefore, to follow up his discoveries.

The great question at that time was to find the opening of some large river on the east coast, which would give a navigable highway to the interior. Two ways had been noticed by Cook, which seemed to those who now pondered over his voyages and map to promise some hope of success: these were Harvey's Bay and Glass House Bay; the former of which was thought to be the most promising opening, but which, in reality, was no more than the strait which separated an island from the mainland.

When Flinders returned from Tasmania, he was not immediately wanted for service on board the *Reliance*, and he memorialized the Government to be allowed to explore northward. This request was eagerly complied with; there was no man in all Australia who had proved himself so fit for the business of an explorer,

and there was none in whom the Government had more confidence. The sloop *Norfolk* was again put into commission, and the command given to Flinders, with the same crew, and in addition the nephew of Flinders. Mr. Bass, however, did not form one of the party, he had quitted the station soon after the return from Tasmania to return to England. He went as the mate of a trading vessel, and was thereafter lost sight of. His history was rather a sad one. The only child of a widowed mother, he had gone to sea, in a vessel of his own—a mode of life for which he had always shown an unconquerable passion, although he had taken his diploma as a surgeon with honour. His vessel was lost, and he joined the navy. He never returned home. The last news his mother and wife received of him was that he was leaving China, and would be back in three months. All tidings of him were then lost; his wife and mother died soon after, and it does not appear that either he or they ever received any reward for his immense services to Australia.*

On the 8th July, 1799, Flinders was despatched again. Nothing very remarkable was observed in the first part of his journey. The land which had not been seen by Cook was low, and covered with brush down to the cliffs on the coast, which were of very moderate elevation. Above them the land rose very gradually, ridge over ridge, to a moderate height. The aspect was agreeable, but neither very fertile nor beautiful, for the trees were small, and the brushwood evidently dense.

Flinders had only received leave of absence for six weeks, which would hardly have been sufficient for all he wanted to do, but even this moderate space was likely to be further curtailed, from the crazy structure of the little bark. On the morning of the 10th, it was found that the cutter had sprung a leak, which admitted so much water that one pump was kept constantly going. But he was determined to keep the vessel on her course. He passed Cook's Solitary Islands, but made no observations upon them, except that they

* Sydney's Three Colonies of Australia.

should have been called The Miserables. A little beyond them he saw an opening, which he gladly entered, hoping to find a river without going so far as Moreton Bay. It was a shallow inlet, of little or no value for any purpose, and was named Shoal Bay.

On the 15th, they were thirteen miles distant from Cape Byron, with Mount Warning just appearing over it. When they had cleared the reef at Point Danger, they steered west for a large open space where no land was visible; this was Moreton Bay. Passing between these breakers and Point Lookout, they got ground in twenty fathoms water. As they drew nearer there seemed to be a very large extent of water within the opening, but the country towards the sea was as sterile, wretched, and sandy as could well be imagined. At dusk, Cape Moreton was rounded, and they got into Glass House Bay. There they anchored, intending, if possible, to repair the leak.

They landed next morning. They had brought a native with them from Sydney, who commenced at once to parley with some savages, who came down upon the beach to meet them, carrying their fishing nets. They seemed very peaceable at first, and accepted some presents. But, before the first interview was ended, they became troublesome, and the whites, to avoid a conflict, shoved off their boat from the shore; they were not, however, suffered to depart so easily. While the rest of the natives looked applaudingly on, one ran into the water and discharged a spear, which narrowly missed the retreating boat. Flinders immediately wounded the savage, and a seaman in the boat fired among the crowd and wounded another. It was certainly an extreme course to take for so slight an offence, but Flinders said that he wanted to repair his ship there; as the lives of the party would be at the mercy of the savages, it was necessary to make them fear him.

From the low sandy point where this affair happened, and which was named Point Skirmish, they proceeded up the opening, which proved to be the river leading up to Glass House Peaks. These peaks seemed to stand on low, flat ground, considerably within the

mountains, and were thought to be volcanic, because Flinders remarks that the ground all about was covered with pumice. Five or six native huts were found standing near each other; these were different from those in Sydney, and far better and more elaborate in their structure. They resembled a covered archway, rounded at the far end.

At daylight, in the morning of Wednesday, the 17th, the sloop was got under weigh, and anchored about a mile and a half from a point with red cliffs. The rocks were of stone, strongly impregnated with iron, with some small pieces of quartz and granite scattered about the shore. Beyond this, as they advanced up the bay, they passed four islands, and then they were fairly in the stream; which was named Pumice Stone River.

On the following morning Flinders took his boat up the river; his intention was to visit the Glass Houses, for he saw very well that the stream would terminate among them. As he went up, he noticed a round mount with sloping sides, at no great distance from him, or at least nearer than the higher hills, and he left his boat and walked towards it. After a fatiguing walk of nine miles, he reached the summit. The ascent was very difficult. The mount was a pile of stones of all sizes, with good soil in patches and crevices, upon which a dense growth of tussack grass grew. But the trees were good; they were tall and straight and of thin growth, so as to give the hill a pleasant, shady appearance. From this hill the view of the bay and the neighbouring country was very extensive; the uppermost part of the former seemed to terminate in a winding river, along the banks of which there were columns of smoke in many places. The lower part of country near the sea was sandy and arid, but in the far distance to the eastward rose a pile of irregular mountains, too distant to show aught but their outlines in the thin, blue haze. A nearer view of the Glass Houses showed Flinders that he was mistaken in supposing them to be volcanic; on the contrary, the stone of most of the rocks he saw was a sandstone often very much stained with the ferruginous oxide. Altogether the

Norfolk remained fifteen days in Glass House Bay, which was found to be so full of shoals that Flinders could not, on his return, recommend it as an harbour.

The next place of destination was Hervey's Bay, which the *Norfolk* reached in two days, and which certainly seemed a very promising opening for a river. Flinders sailed all round it, however, and could discover none. On the contrary, the place seemed most unlikely for anything of that kind. The coast was low and shallow; and as for the quality of the land, it was about the most sterile and sandy that he had ever explored. From thence Flinders returned to Sydney.

It should be remembered that though this expedition resulted in nothing important, it commenced discoveries which afterwards became of great service. For instance, Shoal Bay was found afterwards to be the mouth of the Clarence River, one of the most important on the eastern coast, and causing, by its very size and the quantity of earth it annually brings down, the shallowness of the bay which Flinders examined in so very cursory a manner. On the bar, the water of the stream is so shallow, and the windings of the channel so carefully concealed by mangroves, that it is no wonder at all that Flinders could not perceive it. It is strange, however, that he came to miss in his hurry the very features he had come to seek, and which in this instance, and in the case of the Brisbane River Bay, lay almost within his grasp, or very close to the places to which his explorations extended. Singularly enough, in his report he congratulated the governor at ascertaining as a fact, that no river of importance intersected the coast between the 29th and 34th parallels of south latitude. Nothing more was done just then either with the *Norfolk* or its discoveries, and Flinders returned to the *Reliance*, to perform his usual duties as midshipman.

In September of this same year, the governor made some few discoveries to the north of Sydney. There were some cattle which had escaped from the Government herds, running wild in the bush. They formed a drove which occupied a particular part of the most grassy country, then known as Cowpasture Plains. In

making an excursion to the latter, the governor crossed the Nepean much further to the northward than he had ever done before. In this direction he and his party traversed a new tract of country, which was beautiful for its scenery, and especially adapted for pasturage and cultivation. Beyond this they again crossed the river, passing through mountainous country, but of excellent quality, and then leading to Sydney over level, well-grassed, and well-watered soil.

In January, 1800, a brig, named the *Lady Nelson*, under the command of Lieutenant Grant, was sent out from England to Australia, to act as a surveying ship, under the direction of the governor of the colony. She was only 60 tons burthen, but she was what was then termed a model ship. She was built expressly for the purpose of trying the excellence of sliding keels, from which great advantages were expected by the inventor, Captain Schanck. It seemed a most hazardous undertaking in those days for so small a vessel to undertake so long a voyage, and many were the direful prophecies and sad forebodings among naval officers as to the result. Times have changed considerably since then. It is not so very long since the colonists saw the arrival from England of a small cutter of only five tons burthen, and she had accomplished the trip in the astonishing time of sixty-five days.

The *Lady Nelson* was directed to try the passage through Bass's Straits, hitherto unattempted by any vessel from home. It will scarcely be believed, however, that she was more than eleven months before she arrived off the coast of Australia. Of course, there were stoppages, for as much as three months, at the Cape; but even from the latter place the ship was two months getting to the 139th meridian, in latitude about 38°.

On the 3rd December, land was seen. It at first appeared like two islands, but as the vessel neared, two capes were discovered, with a low line of mainland lying behind them; the first was called Cape Northumberland. It has since 1800 had a sad reputation in Australia. It is a prominent part of the coast, jutting

far into the sea, and vessels making for Bass's Straits were very apt to come upon it. Worst of all, there is a long reef of rocks lying beyond it, making the danger a very great one, for the land within is low and not easily seen. Many vessels have been wrecked upon it, and the lonely beach is strewn for miles with the sad memorials of life and property whose destruction it has caused. A lighthouse now exists upon the cape.

Captain Grant could see but little of an inviting character on the shore before him. The land was barren and sandy, not seeming to support much vegetation; and though nearly seventy years have elapsed since then, and colonization has caused numerous habitations near the place, it is still a lonely and desolate spot. At one time a ship was dashed to pieces upon the reef, and so deserted was the beach that when the wreck was discovered, a few bones were all that remained of the crew. Even now that there is a little seaport (Port McDonnell), close inside the cape, a lighthouse on it, and very thriving towns within twenty miles, the coast forms a scene of utter loneliness and sterility. But a little way inland a wonderful change takes place. The country grows green and is luxuriantly grassed. Fine tall trees succeed, and the soil becomes as rich as that of any country in the world. Captain Grant guessed this, for he says he saw, further inland, two high mountains. The nearer appeared to him like a table mountain, and the further one like a fine isolated peak; both he said were well wooded, and seemed to show a very fertile country inland. He called the first Mount Schanck, after Admiral Schanck, the inventor of the sliding keels, and the founder of the Society for Promoting Naval Architecture. The further one was called after Admiral Lord Gambier, who commanded the fleet at the battle of Copenhagen. Both these mountains are volcanic. They belong to a chain of extinct volcanoes, which extends eastward as far as Port Phillip, giving rise to the richest soil imaginable, and some of the finest scenery upon this coast.

The shore to the eastward of Cape Northumberland was of sandy character, but not so low as such coasts

usually are. On the contrary, the sand rose up in hills and hummocks very high above the sea level, and far back from the surf, which was really terrible upon that shore. Beyond the sand hummocks densely wooded hills rose still higher, and seemed, if neither picturesque nor fertile, at least not barren. But the whole scene was one of savage gloom. There was in front the white ridge of beach sand studded here and there with patches of rushes, which ought to have been green, but which looked black at a distance. Above these was the drifting sand, standing out in huge, unspotted yellow masses, and seeming more gloomy from its light unvarying colour; last of all, the wooded hills, thick, black, and dark, and the whole so lonely, so mysterious, and with even the stillness of death, but for the pealing roar of the surf which ever beat and boomed along the shore.

But if the view from the sea is desolate, the view inland is far worse. The only road which now runs along the coast lies between the yellow sand hummocks and the black woods. These are sand-dunes. Every year they advance more and more towards the hills. The road is over-drifted; large trees are buried; valleys are filled up, and the sand is yearly rising higher and higher. I have never beheld a more desolate scene than from the top of one of these sand hummocks—one looks down over a slope of about two miles of heaving billows of yellow sand. Here and there a break or a hollow, with rushes growing in small tufts, or a peak of sand rising like a ruin amid ruins. The sea beyond is very dark in colour, probably from contrast and from the whiteness of the surf, which extends fully half a mile.

Captain Grant could see a part of all this, and he could guess a great deal more as he sailed along. It was fortunate that there was not much of this kind of beach. It was broken in front of him by a fine cape, which stretched out into the sea, and seemed to defy the swell of the Southern Ocean. This was named Cape Bridgewater. It was not high, nor very rocky. It seemed formed of low cliffs of sandstone, near the

water, and above was clothed by a thick forest. About fifteen miles beyond this there was another cape, and between them both a very deep bay.

At this time the weather was gloomy, dark, and sultry. There were low, moist-looking clouds lying heavily about the horizon, and a long, rolling swell came along the sea. There was no wind. The *Lady Nelson* could not be brought into the bay except by towing, and as the captain was anxious to land, for the appearance of the shore was improved, he thought that good anchorage might be found. He rowed in for about five miles, but found the water still so deep that he returned to the ship. But he had seen the shore. It was, apparently, well grassed; and though the rocks were of a light colour above, below they were black and rugged. This circumstance has been since explained. The formation is a shelly limestone, lying on submarine trap-rock or lava. Beyond the second cape there was another, and some rocks (the Laurence Rocks), and then the land extended north as far as the eye could reach. Near the last cape (Cape Grant), the shore was high and moderately wooded. The cliffs, at first, were red and earthy; but as they went northward they became lower, until they again sprang up into tall bluffs of rocks, exactly like chalk at a distance. These latter did not continue long. The rest of the coast was low, and well wooded, stretching up in slopes to higher land further in shore. When Grant saw it, there was much smoke upon the hill, showing that the land was inhabited. It was called Portland Bay.

Grant did not lose much time in examining how far it went inland, but pressed on to the eastward. Had he kept close in he would have found it very low, sandy, and rocky; with grassy patches here and there; but he would have found no shelter there, nor anything which could be called an important discovery. He, however, passed one island about twelve miles off the shore. It was high and rocky, and about a mile long. He called it Lady Julia Percy's Island, a compliment to the Northumberland family, of which all

subsequent inhabitants and geographers must feel the inconvenience.

To the east of this bay was a high and bold cape. Its shores appeared inaccessible, but the land was picturesque and beautiful, abounding in wood, thick groves, and large trees. Indeed, the scene which it presents from the sea gives no idea of the terrible nature of the forests upon it. The cape is a peninsula, lying to the south of the great basaltic tract of Western Victoria. It consists of high ranges, dense scrubs, and enormous timber, and a vegetation quite tropical. There is, probably, no part of Australia which has always attracted so much interest as this cape. The difficulty of penetrating its forests, and the rumours which have always existed as to its mineral richness, have given it an air of importance and mystery which few other places possess.

Beyond Cape Otway, Captain Grant saw another point of land under which he fancied he could find shelter. It was rather a high cape, with a clump of trees upon its top, looking just if they had been planted there; but the coast was too dangerous for him to land upon. It was a sandy beach, with rocks interspersed here and there upon it; but there was too much surf for a boat. This was the more tantalizing as the coast was very beautiful; consisting nearly of valleys and downs, with streams of water meandering through them. The crew of the *Lady Nelson* all agreed that the scenery was exactly like that of the Isle of Wight, "and therefore," says Captain Grant, "I called it after Captain Wight, son-in-law of Captain Schanck, the inventor of the sliding keels." The reason is rather a curious one. Are we to believe that Captain Wight was like the island? The history of the geographical nomenclature of Australia would make a curious appendix to the history of discovery.

The land now trended very much to the northward, and was high, bold, and well wooded. It was evident that it formed a deep bay, which it would have been well worth Grant's while to have examined. This, however he did not feel inclined to do, so he steered

eastward to reach the south-east side of it. That night he sailed sixty miles, and next morning no land was visible except that he had just left, which was dimly visible in the far distance. But about eight o'clock the land began to appear again to the eastward. This was Wilson's Promontory, or the Furneaux's Land, which had been first discovered by Mr. George Bass. It will be seen, by consulting the map, that Captain Grant had, by stretching across the bay, missed the chance of discovering Port Phillip, which lies at the head of it. The large indentation he had sailed across was 120 miles wide, and there were very few explorers who, under similar circumstances, would not have been anxious to examine every foot of the coast, or have suffered any inconvenience rather than have left it undone.

An hour after sighting Wilson's Promontory, they saw several islands. The mainland seemed to have an opening in it to the northward, and the brig was steered for it. It turned out to be another bay, with low land round it. The northernmost cape was named Cape Liptrap. The mainland now seemed extending a considerable way to the southward, with several islands off it. Abreast of the ship it appeared as if no great distance away, so the boats were got out and they made towards the bay. They pulled in shore, steering for the largest of some islands lying on the west side of Cape Liptrap. Grant meant to have landed and planted some seeds he had with him. The distance was, however, much greater than he imagined, and by the time he had lost sight of his ship, he seemed as far from the shore as ever. At last, he came near the beach, and then there was another disappointment—the surf was too heavy to think of landing, and he therefore, with much regret, had to abandon this his best effort to explore a little portion of the coast. He certainly made one more attempt to land, on a rock near Wilson's Promontory, but this, like all the other attempts, was a failure.

The *Lady Nelson* made some other discoveries in Bass's Straits, with reference to the number and shape of the islands which she passed; but her explorations

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virtually terminated at Wilson's Promontory, where she came upon the discoveries of Mr. G. Bass. When she arrived in Sydney, the tidings of what had been done by so small a ship, in such dangerous seas, induced the Government to put her again on commission at once, and her first duty, as a surveying ship, was to go back to Western Port, to survey that harbour.

She entered the port on the 21st March, discovering two islands just within the entrance. From the likeness of one of them to a snapper's head, it was named Snapper's Island. The small islands off them were covered with seals, and were named in consequence Seal Islands. Before they had come there they had anchored in Jervis Bay. Seven canoes got round them, in one of which was an old man, whose hair and beard were perfectly white with age, and who appeared to be treated with great respect by the tribe. The canoes were paddled about by oval pieces of bark, and they had two or three pegs at their prows upon which to steady their spears. But here at first they saw no natives at all. The first care was to search at the head of the harbour for a stream of fresh water which Mr. Bass had described. In going to this a very pleasant island was discovered; it was of gradual ascent, well covered with trees of considerable height, and much underwood. The soil was extremely rich, and the prospect around delightful, so that Captain Grant commenced a garden upon it, and called it Churchill Island. Many seeds were planted on this island, amongst which were some pippins. Having buried them, Captain Grant began devoutly speculating on the manner in which the fruit would increase, and the tree become a very common one in South Australia; and he enters in his work a modest request to future colonists, that they will always call the apple Lady Elizabeth Percy's apple; because, he adds, "her ladyship's care and attention enabled me to introduce it there." It may be satisfactory to Lady Elizabeth's descendants, to inform them that the seeds did not grow, or that, if they did, the apple-tree has disappeared;

and as for Lady Elizabeth Percy's apple, it is as little known as the amiable lady herself.

The *Lady Nelson* remained altogether a considerable time near Western Port, making a survey of the land around. It was found to be very fertile, with good grass. The trees were not very numerous, but the underwood was extremely thick, so much so indeed as to render a passage through it a work of immense difficulty. The open land was very green and luxuriant, but at the same time soft and boggy. A good many excursions were made from time to time, either up the course of the fresh-water stream, or along others which were subsequently discovered. Near the coast there was much dense forest, but beyond it they came to a level country entirely clear of timber and brushwood. The grass was so thick that it was found difficult to pass through it. The plain extended as far as they could see on one side, but on the other it was enclosed by hills. The character of Western Port is, however, that of a dense forest country. There are patches here and there like those described by Captain Grant, but the thickness of its forests and its underwood is proverbial along the south coast of Australia. It is here that the fern-tree reaches such luxuriance and perfection; it is here that the tall gum-tree vies with forest kinds of Tasmania, sometimes reaching a height of ninety feet without a branch; and, finally, it was near here that Count Strzelecki was five weeks in cutting his way for himself and his poor famished companions over a few miles of country.

Altogether, during this trip of the *Lady Nelson*, an almost complete survey of the port was made. Two creeks were found and explored to some extent, as just mentioned. Another island was found on the opposite shore, called Margaret Island, and near it were several small creeks. After ascertaining these facts, the brig surveyed the three bays round Wilson's Promontory, and then returned to Sydney.

The *Lady Nelson* was now ordered to convey Colonel Paterson round to Hunter's River, the stream which has already been mentioned as containing a rich

deposit of coal upon its banks. The object of this voyage was to make a survey of the river. Nothing very remarkable resulted from this trip, except the establishment of a depôt, about forty miles from the mouth of the stream, where the banks were thought to be particularly fertile. On their way the party landed at a small creek, which they traced for a considerable distance. They thus came upon a gradual ascent, covered with the most luxuriant grass. From this height there was an extensive view inland. The country was very fine, and, apparently, secure from the inundations of the river. The hill was named Mount Egerton.

Further up the river they found two more mountains, which enabled them to extend their view. After passing these, they imagined that they had got behind the Blue Mountains, though they could still see the coast; and between them and the hills was a perfectly level space, many miles in extent, covered with trees and underwood, but to all appearances swampy. The land on the south side of the river was interspersed with lagoons covered with game; but not for want of natives to kill them, for there were evidently plenty about. The boat would have gone higher up the river, but the channel wound so much that it would have taken days to advance a few miles. They therefore returned, and these discoveries terminated the expedition.

As to their having got behind the Blue Mountains, this was a fallacy. There is no break in their continuity for many miles north of this river. There occurs, however, just about this point an area or recess, in which the chain sweeps back to meet the spur which cuts off the Liverpool Plains from the coast country. This is the reason why the Hunter River extends so much further westward than any of those on the eastern side of the range.

CHAPTER VI.

FLINDERS AT THE SOUTH COAST.

Flinders' explorations in the *Investigator*—The Australian Bight—Fowler's, Streaky, and Coffin's Bays — Port Lincoln—Spencer's Gulf — Mounts Brown and Arden — Yorke's Peninsula — Kangaroo Island — Gulf St. Vincent — Mount Lofty — Cape Jervis — Encounter Bay — Flinders and Baudin's expedition—Lacepede, Guichen, and Rivoli Bays, Port Phillip.

We left Flinders serving as a midshipman on board the *Reliance*, after his return from Moreton Bay. In the latter end of the year 1800 that vessel returned from the station, and Flinders found himself once more in England. He lost no time in making known what he had done, and very soon the charts of his discoveries in Tasmania were published. This brought him at once into notice, and paved the way for pushing his plans further. Of course, such a man as Flinders could not think of resting: he had tasted the delights of exploration, and with feverish anxiety he longed to give his life to that one pursuit alone. Fortunately, there was at that time in England a man who could appreciate all this, and had sufficient interest with the Admiralty to cause them to do all that Flinders desired. This was Sir Joseph Banks. On hearing the bold plans of the young midshipman, and seeing how much he had done upon small resources, and how little he required for what he wanted to do then, Sir Joseph willingly laid his plan before Earl Spencer, then First Lord of the Admiralty. The plan was approved of, and laid before the king. Poor old George III., who knew but little about Australia, for it had sprung up into notice during a blank in his existence, gave his assent willingly.

Orders were given to purchase a ship for an expedition to Australia, and the command was to be given to the enterprising young navigator, who had shown himself so zealous in the matter hitherto.

The vessel selected was of the kind recommended by Cook for exploration purposes. She was a north country built ship, of 340 tons burthen—not very new, it is true, but still, it was thought, with considerable work in her yet. Her name had been the *Xenophon*, and might with propriety have been changed to *Anabasis* without offending the shade of the Greek historian; but it was thought better, perhaps, to connect her more with ideas of advance than retreat, and she was called the *Investigator*. She was coppered, and repaired, and fitted for a long voyage; and besides provisions, &c., had a scientific staff, comprising, among others, Robert Brown, the celebrated—justly celebrated—botanist; and Westall, the equally famous landscape painter. It may be stated at once that a more fortunate selection for the purpose could not have been made. Australia owes very much to both these men. The labours of Brown upon the coast left nothing to be desired. Of course, he could not see everything; but he saw so much that one is astonished to observe how little was left for others to do. Since his time naturalists have had hard work to glean novelties from the regions near which R. Brown set his foot. To Westall the same meed of praise can be given. The classic story of Flinders is rendered truly charming by the powerful pencil of the artist. It is not only the number of drawings which he made, almost giving a panorama of the part of the land they visited, but it is the graphic touch which seems to take at once those features which are peculiarly its own, the want of which makes the finest of drawing unreal, because it is not Australian, and has not its atmosphere.

With such companions, Flinders sailed from Spithead on the 18th July, 1801. He called at Madeira and the Cape; and on the 6th December Cape Leeuwin was seen. This was five months nearly, including stoppages, to perform less than Australian traders do

now in ten weeks. This did not look well for the *Investigator* at the very commencement. When Flinders got well in with the land, he coasted slowly along it. This part of the shore was described before, and need not be particularized now. It was high, bold, and rocky, and became lower as it was traced to the westward. The vessel was taken into King George's Sound, and the crew landed there. They could not find the record stated to have been left by Captain Vancouver, but there was evidence of a late visit of some Europeans, for the trees had been recently cut down with some sharp instrument. A survey was taken of the harbour as well as could be, but it was so shallow in places that the boat could not come very near to the shore. In returning, they found an explanation of the recently cut trees. There was a neglected garden at one side of the channel, and close to it was a sheet of copper, bearing this inscription :—"August 27, 1800 : Chr. Dixson, ship *Ellegood*." This was doubtless some whaling or sealing ship which had remained there.

Finding no eligible place to refit his ship, Flinders took her into a neighbouring inlet, named Princess Royal Harbour. While some necessary repairs were being made, and the astronomical observations recorded from tents upon shore, Flinders formed a party of thirteen officers, with two days' provisions, intending to visit some capes he could see behind West Cape Howe. He walked along the shore to the north-western end of the harbour. Here were several small streams of fresh water, but they gave no indication of any supply further inland, and their source was close at hand, in some peaty swamps. The course for the lakes led through swamps and thick brushwood. A native was seen running away ; but an old man, quite unarmed, came to them quite willingly, and accompanied them through the woods. He wanted them to go to the eastward, but as this was inconveniently opposite to the way they wanted to go, they changed their course, and the old man left them. The explorers now took the skirts of the coast hills to avoid the brushwood ; but they had plenty of it, even on this course, and marshes to cross

besides. At last they reached the first lake. It was a fine piece of water, about a mile and a half long, and received the drainage of numerous swamps near. In coasting round it, a fine winding rivulet was reached. They proceeded up it to the inland country, towards some hills, and here they camped for the night. Next morning they reached the south-western lake, and found it to be larger than the first. Its water was brackish. They then struck southward, and ascended the hills. This brought them to the top of some cliffs, under which the sea was booming and foaming from the southernly swell. The aspect of the country was cheerless. The soil was sandy, and if it supported any growth, it was only the dense brush they had come through; and there was little or no fresh water. In returning to the ship, Mr. Westall "knocked up," from fatigue and want of water. Mr. Brown and three others remained with him, while the rest of the party moved on for assistance; but this was unnecessary, as the whole party reached the tents at midnight. This trifling incident is the dawn of records of suffering, of which we shall see a good deal in the course of this history.

In leaving King George's Sound and Princess Royal Harbour, Flinders summed up a few observations, which can be usefully given here. He remarked that the basis of the stone was granite, which frequently showed itself upon the surface as a smooth, bare rock; but on the sea-coast hills and shores of the south the granite was generally covered with a crust of limestone. Captain Vancouver mentions having found on the top of Bald Head branches of coral protruding from the sand; but these, as explained by Darwin and myself,* are due to calcareous concretions. Flinders found the same, and fancied that they were fossil trees. The soil of the hills was found to be very barren, though, except near the sea-coast, generally covered with wood. The plains were a little better, especially near the rivulet.

From King George's Sound, Flinders coasted close to the land, in the hope of finding some new opening

* "Darwin's "Nat. Voy." Woods' "Geol. Obs. in S. Australia."

or inlet. In this he was quite disappointed. For days he sailed along the Australian Bight (first discovered by Nuyts, in 1827), each day only revealing more and more of that fearful coast. Flinders thus described it :—

"The shore curved round here, and took a more easterly direction; and the bank of level land which continued to run further along behind it, approached very near to the water side. Three leagues further on, it formed cliffs, and a projecting part of them, named Point Culver, was the furthest land in sight. Our course along the shore was so favoured by the wind that at seven in the evening we had passed another projecting part of the cliffs, named Point Dover, distant from the last point fifty miles.

"The elevation of these cliffs appeared to be about 500 feet, and nothing of the back country was seen above them. In the upper part they are brown, in the lower part nearly white; and the two strata, as also the smaller, of which each is composed, are nearly horizontal. They were thought to be calcareous, as was the white, grey, and brown sand which the lead brought up when the bottom was not of coral. A surveyor finds almost no object here to set his position by. Each small projection presents the appearance of a steep cape, as it opens out in sailing; but before the ship arrives abreast of it, it is lost in the general uniformity of the coast. Point Culver and Point Dover are exceptions to this general uniformity; but it requires a ship to be near the land before even these are distinguishable."

There was a break for a short distance in the line of the cliffs, and smoke was seen rising from the land behind. This break did not continue long: the cliffs again recommenced.

"The length of these cliffs, from their second commencement, is 33 leagues; and that of the level bank, from near Cape Pasley, is no less than 145 leagues. The height of this extraordinary bank is nearly the same throughout, being nowhere less than 400 nor anywhere more than 600 feet. In the first 20 leagues the ragged tops of some inland mountains were seen over

it, but during the remainder of its long course the bank was the limit of our view.

"This equality of elevation for so great an extent, and the calcareous nature of the banks, at least in the upper 200 feet, would bespeak it to have been the exterior line of a vast coral reef, which is always more elevated than the interior parts, and commonly level with high-water mark. From the gradual subsiding of the sea, or perhaps by a sudden convulsion of nature, this bank may have attained its present height above the surface; and, however extraordinary such a change may appear, yet, when it is recollected that branches of coral still exist upon Bald Head, at the elevation of 400 or more feet, this supposition assumes a great probability. It would further seem that the subsiding of the waters has not been at a period very remote, since these frail branches have yet neither been beaten down nor mouldered away by wind or weather. If this supposition be well founded, it may, with the fact of no hill or other object being seen above the bank in the great part of its course, assist in forming some conjecture of what may be within it, which cannot, as I judge in such case, be other than flat sandy plains or water. The bank may even be a narrow barrier between an exterior and interior sea; and much do I regret not having formed an idea of this probability at the time, for, notwithstanding the great difficulty and risk, I should certainly have attempted a landing upon some part of the coast, to ascertain a fact of so much importance."

This long quotation from Flinders's journal has been given to show the extraordinary nature of this part of the coast, and not with a view of indorsing his opinions. I have, in another work, shown the probable nature of these cliffs, and need not say much about them now. They are part of an immense tertiary formation, which is very extensively distributed in the south portions of the Australian continent. I need not, perhaps, tell the reader that they do not form the exterior wall of a coral reef, as Mr. Flinders imagined. Further on, an account will be read of a terrible overland journey along them,

and of the desolation of the country which they flank as a rampart. As a remarkable coast feature, these cliffs are unexampled in the rest of the world.

At the termination of the second range of cliffs, Flinders found that the coast became sandy, and trended north-eastward for about three leagues, and thus formed the head of the Australian Bight. A little beyond this was Cape Nuyts, and this was the furthest point explored hitherto. The coast was still a sandy beach in front, with the land rising from thence for three or four miles to a moderate elevation. It was wooded, but apparently very sandy.

Just beyond Cape Nuyts, a bay was found, named Fowler's Bay, after the first lieutenant of the *Investigator*. Some of the crew landed there, and the cliffs and rocks were found to be calcareous. There was no timber, and no fresh water; and yet the country bore many traces of being much frequented by natives. About this bay and Cape Nuyts many islands were found, which took some considerable time to survey. They need delay us but little, however. Flinders landed upon some, and found the basis to consist of granite. Many curious animals and plants were found upon them, but their other points of interest were but few.

After Fowler's Bay, Smoky Bay, Streaky Bay, Anxious Bay, and Coffin's Bay were discovered—the latter after Sir Isaac Coffin, the commissioner who had fitted out the *Investigator;* and Streaky Bay from the singular streaks in the water where the vessel anchored. There was absolutely nothing of interest in connection with any one of these bays: the whole coast thereabouts was described as moderately high, with little timber, rocky, and barren. The rocks were generally granite, covered with white limestone, of the same formation as that found in the Australian Bight. The coast trended generally in a south-east direction as far as Coffin's Bay, where it turned back, and ended in a long promontory, named Point Sir Isaac. The most prominent capes on this uninteresting and monotonous coast were named Point Drummond, Cape Radstock, and Point Bell, after various persons connected with fitting

out this expedition. A conspicuous mountain, visible inland, was named Mount Greenly.

On the evening of the 16th of February, Point Sir Isaac was passed, and some islands visible in the south-west obtained the name of Greenly Isles. Point Whidbey, Whidbey's Isles, and Point Avoid were successively named, and then the vessel stood off from a bight, which was named Avoid Bay. The next day an island was seen to the south-west, lying off a prominent cape, with a wide bay beyond. The island was named Liguanea Island; the cape, Cape Wiles; and the bay, Sleaford Bay. Still the land was low and uninteresting; still was there the curse of barrenness and aridity set upon all the inland elevations which rose to view.

And now the coast seemed to trend again to the northward. In fact, its northerly direction was astonishing. Some islands lay to the eastward, and a large block of land, which might prove to be the eastern termination of the inlet they were now entering. This was not the case, however. They steered to the north of the land, and still there was no shore visible to the east. The evening was far advanced when this was ascertained, and as the shelter in the strait was good, the vessel was anchored. A strong tide came that night from the north-east, but no land could be seen from whence it came. This circumstance, with the trending of the coast, gave rise to many conjectures. Large rivers, deep inlets, inland seas and passages into the Gulf of Carpentaria, were terms frequently used in the conversation of that evening. The prospect of making a new discovery seemed to have infused new life and vigour into the crew.

Early in the morning Flinders landed. He was anxious to ascertain the connection of the eastern land with the main, if any such existed. As he neared the beach, he found it to be of great interest. There were seals upon it, and, further on, innumerable traces of kangaroo. There were no signs of the natives, and yet the woods had been burnt by bush-fires. The place was, in other respects, a perfect solitude. It was not long before the insularity of this land was ascertained.

Flinders called it Thistle Island, after the mate of his vessel, who was destined here to make the place doubly remarkable by his own sad fate.

To the north of Thistle Island a group of islands were seen, and as the shore appeared of a favourable description, the cutter was sent on shore, in charge of Mr. Thistle and a midshipman named Taylor, to search for an anchorage where water might be procured. This led to a sad accident. The little boat was carefully watched sailing boldly in shore. There were no signs of natives, nor any apparent danger, as she skimmed briskly along. Her movements could be seen for a long while, pausing here and there, as some promising little opening seemed to hold out a hope of what they sought. Towards evening she was seen again under sail, working her way lightly across a dancing sea, towards the vessel. Darkness came on, and she was lost sight of rather suddenly, it was remarked afterwards, and before the light had become too dim to discern her outline. Half-an-hour after dusk, and the officer on the watch had become uneasy. He had been pacing up and down, expecting every moment to hear the plashing of the waves, and to hear the cheerful hail of the officer in charge. Flinders, at last, was informed of the delay. Lieutenant Fowler was immediately sent away in a boat, with a lantern, to see what could keep the missing crew. Two hours elapsed, and the boat did not return. A gun was then fired. This brought back Mr. Fowler, but alone. He could see no traces of the cutter. Near the place where she had been last seen, he had met with so strong a rippling in the water that his boat would have been upset had he been sailing. There was every reason now to fear what had been poor Thistle's fate. It was too dark to see anything; hallooing only brought back the echo of their own voices, and no reply could be obtained to the firing of the muskets. Had there been daylight, probably some might have been saved; but as it was, the strong rippling tide would not only carry the boat out to sea, but also bear away those who would still struggle by swimming.

At daybreak, the vessel was steered across to the

mainland, in the direction where the cutter had been seen, keeping an officer at the masthead, with a glass, to look out for her. There was a cove in front of them into which it was just possible the cutter might have gone; so the *Investigator* was steered into it, and anchored. The mainland extended from north-west to south-east, and the islands around formed a very good shelter for the bay.

A boat was despatched in search of the cutter. It was not long before it cleared up the mystery. In a very short time it returned, towing the wrecked boat, bottom upwards. It was a perfect ruin, having been dashed violently against the rocks. There was not the least sign to indicate what had become of the crew. The boat was again sent away in search, and a midshipman was stationed upon a headland, to observe everything which might drift by with the tide. Mr. Brown landed to search the beach, and Flinders proceeded to the southern extremity of the mainland, to institute a search there. This point was now named Cape Catastrophe; and the island near, Taylor's Island; the latter in memory of the midshipman.

The furthest hope of Flinders was now to recover some of the bodies of the lost men; but even this poor consolation was denied him. Not a trace of them was ever discovered; and the sight of a number of sharks around the vessel gave a horrible explanation of the cause. When every effort that could be devised to save any of the survivors had been gone through, the *Investigator* sailed on, to pursue her discoveries in this wide inlet. Before doing so, Flinders called the site of the disaster Memory Cove; and he left an engraved copper plate informing future comers of his sad disaster. Besides this, he named six of the islands after men lost in the boat; and then went on to pursue his explorations in the remarkable gulf before him.

In the boat expeditions made in search of the cutter, the coast had been found to turn sharply round from its northern course, and bend in sufficiently to give rise to a beautiful bay, which, in addition to its shelter from the surrounding land, was also protected by an island

about four miles long. As Flinders was a native of Lincolnshire, he called the bay Port Lincoln, and the island Boston Island. The latter appeared as woody as the mainland, and while the boat was sent to examine its capabilities for supplying water to the ship's crew, Flinders landed. He ascended a hill, which he called Stamford Hill. The land he saw around him was beautiful and rich. The port terminated about seven or eight miles westward, and there was a piece of water beyond—a lake, in fact, which seemed to promise abundant supplies. This was called Sleaford Mere.

Flinders spent his time until the 6th of March in surveying and naming the various places in connection with this port. He thought he had made a great discovery, and that upon the south coast there was not a more available harbour, with country around it more pleasing and fertile. His opinions were subsequently confirmed by Messrs. Peron and Freycinet, in Baudin's expedition. Indeed, the French were in raptures with the place, as the following quotation will testify:—"As if nature were inclined, in favour of this port, to change the character of monotony and barrenness stamped upon the neighbouring lands, she has formed its shores of gently rising slopes, and covered them with umbrageous forests. We did not find any fresh water on this spot; but the vigour and liveliness of the vegetation, and the height of the country, were certain indications to us of some rivulets and copious springs." . . . (After some nautical particulars.) "Shall we repeat here what we have already said as to the fertility of the soil? shall we speak of the valleys, which would seem to denote corresponding springs or brooks of fresh water? Is it necessary for us to insist upon those numerous fires which our companions, on approaching the port, observed on all the neighbouring declivities, and which would seem to denote a population much more numerous than other points upon the south-west coast? Worthy to rival Port Jackson, Port Lincoln is, under every point of view, one of the finest harbours of the world, and best adapted to receive a European colony."

Yet, after all this rhetoric, it remains to be told that,

however excellent as a harbour, Port Lincoln forms a wretched settlement. There is, no doubt, a considerable tract of fine country, containing much land that is available for sheep and cattle, and a smaller portion fit for tillage. But the great mass of the peninsula formed between this gulf and Streaky Bay is barren, arid, and of no use whatever; and "although," says Mr. Eyre, who had had better opportunities of judging than most colonists, "Port Lincoln possesses a beautiful, secure, and spacious harbour, with a convenient and pretty site for a town; and immediately contiguous to which there exists some extent of fine and fertile soil, with several good grassy patches of country beyond; yet it can never become a large or important place, in consequence of its complete isolation and the limited nature of its own resources." *

I have dwelt somewhat at length on the real nature of this port, because the moderate praise of Flinders was thought to be unjust by many whaling captains who visited the harbour before it was finally settled upon. Indeed, at one time it was considered a great oversight not to have declared the capital of South Australia there. Yet it seems strange that such opinions should ever have prevailed among any who could reflect for one moment. It was known that to the north of the port the country was an absolute desert, and Flinders had just discovered that the same character prevailed to the westward. Now, as the sea bounded the peninsula south and east, where was it expected to find available country around? This notice of Port Lincoln may be concluded by saying that, after a settlement of over twenty-five years, the place is still a poor, struggling little township.

The *Investigator* was occupied until the 8th of March in surveying the islands in Sir Joseph Banks's group. She then proceeded north. The coast now became low and sandy. A ridge of granite had taken its rise a little above Port Lincoln, and this approached the coast running parallel with it, shutting out any further view

* "Eyre's Journey," vol. i. p. 157.

inland. It was utterly destitute of vegetation, but the country round was scrubby. The land seemed still to trend northward, but the water was getting very shallow, and here and there beyond the ship, out at sea, yellow patches of sand and shoal could be seen occasionally.

They had already advanced more than eighty miles from Cape Catastrophe, and although nothing had been seen as yet to destroy the hopes formed from the strong tides rushing past them, and the general direction of the coast, yet they were considerably damped. There was a want of boldness in the shores which augured badly for the depth of the inlet; and the depth of the water, which was decreasing every mile, did not promise to take them far to the northward.

Any doubt they might have had upon the question was soon set at rest. The inlet took a more northerly direction. It was still very low and barren; the depth did not increase, and land now became visible on the eastern side of the gulf. They anchored that evening. To the west, the land rose gradually from the beach to the same back hills; but behind these again some mountains further inland were now, for the first time, visible. The furthest land visible to the north was merely some detached hummocks, amongst which one was named Mount James.

Next day, the land on the east side of the gulf seemed very near to them as they sailed up. It differed very much from the west side. The latter was, as described, very low and sandy, here and there relieving the monotony by a patch of dark vegetation. The former was high and bold. Near the shore it was very low, not grassy, yet not very fertile, but it rose in the distance to a fine range of mountains, whose distant blue summits could be seen slowly hiding their sharp broken summits in the thin haze of the distance.

The prospect of a channel or strait, cutting off some considerable portion of Terra Australia was now completely lost. The ship had entered into a deep gulf; but there was still a chance of a large river, and this view appearances favoured very much. They turned, therefore, to steer up the gulf, full of hope. It

narrowed very rapidly as they proceeded, and at fifteen miles was scarcely five miles wide. The range on the east side was now very near them; the nearest and most conspicuous mount was named Mount Brown, after the botanist to the expedition. There was a change, too, on the west side. A series of moderately high flat-topped hills began to show themselves, whose eastern bluff, about nine miles off, had the appearance of terminating the gulf, but as the tide ran past the ship at the rate of one mile an hour, they still hoped for a longer course, and that it would end in a fresh-water river.

Early next morning, Messrs. Brown, Westall, and some others set off on an excursion to the eastern mountains (since called Flinders's Range), intending, if possible, to ascend to the top of Mount Brown. While they were absent, Flinders went to examine the head of the gulf. After crossing a shoal, upon which there was only fifteen feet of water, it suddenly deepened to sixty feet; and then as suddenly diminished to twelve. Mangroves now lined the shore, and though the mid-channel was deep enough to float the ship on either side, it shoaled so rapidly that there was no hope of landing. The inlet was seen continuing in a serpentine form between banks covered with mangroves, and into which there was no chance of taking the ship. Flinders, therefore, anchored, and went on in the boat. Even this kind of exploration was soon stopped by mud flats. A landing was with difficulty effected among the mangroves, and after a long search they came to the mortifying conclusion that the water at the head of the gulf was just as salt as the sea at the mouth.

The land between the inlet and the range was low and marshy, and about twelve to fifteen miles wide. To the northward not a hill was visible; to the west only a small flat-topped elevation. All around elsewhere, except in the direction of the range, were mangroves, marshes, and mud flats. There could not be a more desolate scene. It was one degree lower than mere aridity. The land was quite as worthless as if it were dry, and the hopeless prospect of mud and slush

and ooze gives an aspect of inutility and dank unwholesomeness which makes one shudder, especially when, amid all the wet and moisture, there is not one drop fit to quench the thirst. It reminds one of those primitive times revealed to us by geology, when there was light and air, and even life, but not a life of high order, nor beings which could enjoy beauty in variety. The earth was preparing for something better, heaving its mud flats to seeth and simmer, while crustaceans crawled across the slimy soil which water scarcely revealed. So it is at the head of Spencer's Gulf. The mud flats are scarce covered with the water, and where they are, rays and all other sorts of flat fish swim about and pick up a living among the slimy shellfish and shrimps which crawl about. Two men may fill a boat with such in an hour or so; food in abundance, but not a drop of water to drink. Altogether, this gulf is the analogue of the Gulf of Carpentaria, in the north. The latter is just as shallow, as oozy, and useless. Latterly, we have heard in Australia a good deal about utilizing Carpentaria. Why not the head of Spencer's Gulf, if such localities are destined for such experiments? You have, to all intents and purposes, the same coast, but less warm, and a little healthier.

Flinders returned to his ship about ten next night, and Mr. Brown and his party had just arrived. The ascent to Mount Brown had proved very difficult. They had first to walk sixteen miles upon a winding course before reaching the foot of the mount; and then gained the top about five in the evening. They had, as they might have expected, to pass the night without water, nor, indeed, did they get any at all until late next day. But the view from the mount repaid them for all, for the height of the hill was fully three thousand feet above the level of the sea. It was sublime solitude and desolation. To the west was the gulf, meandering through low cliffs topped with sand or shrubs, which, at that distance, looked like yellow meadows. Further on, distance merged both scrub and sand into one subdued dusky brown tint, out of which square blue blocks of table-land rose here and there, in the

distance. To the east the land was wood and plain, and swelling hill, with mountains beyond, rugged and barren. But on every side, north, south, or east, the dusky brown or misty blue was not broken by a single silvery spot of water.

As for the botanical harvest of Mr. Brown, it contained riches untold; flowers bright and rare—"God's jewels," as they are called—abound even in that locality. From the bright scarlet *Clianthus* to the graceful lilac *Hibiscus notabilis*, there was every gradation of colour and hue. The plumage of the birds, too, as throughout all Australia, was very lovely. There is a law of compensation in the beauties of nature. The orange and blue tints of the feathers were rivalled by the gorgeous sunset seen from Mount Brown, such as only can be seen in such a dry atmosphere; and, on the whole, the explorers returned and said that their journey was well repaid by the beauty and variety which they had beheld.

On the 13th March, the *Investigator* commenced coasting down the low sand dunes of the east side of the gulf. This was also the west side of Yorke's Peninsula, though it was not so known to the explorers at the time. For nearly two degrees of latitude it trended first in a south-west, and then in a southerly direction. Three capes were passed in the interim, and named. The coast then opened into a large bay, named after the Earl of Hardwicke. This bay is one of the safest and best in the gulf. There appeared to be plenty of wood and water on the shore, as, in truth, there is. Though the east coast of Yorke's Peninsula is low and sandy, the west coast is only so as seen from the sea. Further inland it is grassy and rich, and contains a very fine extent of pastoral country. What has made it still more notorious and important to South Australia has been the discovery upon it of an immense number of rich mineral lodes of copper and other valuable ores.

Beyond the bay the main coast was not to be distinguished to the southward, except in some land about twenty miles away, which seemed like a very large

island. However, this terminated the examination of the gulf, which received its name after the First Lord of the Admiralty. The extreme southernly point was also named Cape Spencer. The distance between the latter and Cape Catastrophe is about forty-eight miles, and the gulf runs about three hundred miles inland, or perhaps a little more. In the middle of the entrance a group of islands occur, named the Gambier Isles.

When off Cape Spencer, on the 20th March, the *Investigator* was overtaken by a storm, which obliged her to lay under the land on the south. After rounding a point (named Point Marsden, in compliment to the Secretary to the Admiralty), a bay was found beyond. This afforded good shelter, and they anchored in it. It was called Nepean Bay, after Sir E. Nepean, also of the Admiralty.

They did not anchor until the 21st. Next morning they landed. The beach was very grassy, and above it the land rose in woodland or thick forest. As they approached, a large number of dark-brown kangaroos were seen feeding upon a grassy flat by the side of a wood. They did not seem to mind the explorers, but gazed on their movements with indifference. Doubtless they mistook them for seals, which were very numerous about. This impression cost them very dear. Flinders had a double-barrelled gun fitted with a bayonet, and all the crew had muskets. Poor kangaroo! what a misfortune to meet, as the first specimens of the human race, men who had been living on salt meat for many months! That evening thirty-one dead animals were taken on board, the least weighing sixty-nine pounds; the largest, one hundred and twenty-five pounds. The only difference between these and the species found in the forests of New South Wales, was that their colour was darker. They were not destitute of fat. They did not attempt to run away from their destroyers; for, in spite of the butchery going on among them, they suffered themselves to be knocked over with sticks. Flinders seems, from his journal, astonished at their suffering themselves to be shot in the eyes with small shot. We may reasonably say that

the astonishment ought to have been theirs, and we can spare our surprise for Flinders himself for suffering it to be done. The island was called Kangaroo Island.

A slight attempt was made to reach some little distance inland. Flinders scrambled with difficulty through the brushwood and over fallen trees to reach the higher land, with the surveying instruments; but nothing could be seen. Everywhere the wood was so thick and the trees so high that they stopped the prospect on all sides. There could be no doubt that the land was separated from the continent, and that it was very extensive. It was easy also to infer that there were no natives upon it. If there had been, the kangaroos would certainly have been more wary. It might, however, afford these poor beasts some satisfaction to know that they were highly appreciated after death. "The whole of the ship's company was employed this afternoon," says Flinders, "in skinning and cleaning the kangaroos, and a delightful regale they afforded, after four months' privation from almost any fresh provisions. Half a hundredweight of heads, fore-quarters, and tails were stewed down into soup for dinner on this and the succeeding days, and as much steaks given, moreover, to both officers and men as they could consume by day and night." They must have kept at it all night, it would seem.

From Nepean Bay nothing could be seen of the land to the north, and the sole bearing of importance was a high mountain to the eastward. This was named Mount Lofty. The land immediately at the back was high and cliffy, terminating in a bold and prominent cape, named Cape Jervis. It will facilitate the comprehension of this part of Flinders's explorations to bear in mind that the Flinders's Range which was seen at the head of Spencer's Gulf sweeps round to the south-east in an almost uninterrupted chain. Mount Lofty is one of the most prominent elevations of the south part, and it terminates at Cape Jervis.

On the 24th March, the ship got under way from Kangaroo Island, to continue the examination of the land from Cape Spencer. In the evening they saw a

low part of it lying north-east, with a hummock on the land, and a shoal in front of it. This was the since celebrated Troubridge Shoal, so well known as an important danger to be avoided by ships coming from England to Adelaide. It took some days to examine this part of the coast, as the wind was unfavourable. The shore was miserably low and sandy, but could generally be approached within two miles. Many tacks were made in these few days between the northern land and Kangaroo Island, and thus the strait between was very carefully examined. It was called, after the ship, Investigator's Strait.

On the 28th, Mount Lofty was recognised upon the highest part of the ridge of mountains which extended northward from Cape Jervis, a good way from the shore. The nearest part of the coast was about nine miles off. It was low, and composed of sand and rock. A few miles inland, however, the country was very much changed. The back mountains rose, and the slopes were well covered with forest timber, besides being apparently grassy and fertile. The swelling valleys and steep declivities were clothed with bright green turf, and it was evident that among the cliffs and crevices further inland there was fine mountain scenery and drainage for water. Amid it all, the sure sign of the natives rose at intervals. Columns of smoke curling high into the air spoke of camps and warriors who, perhaps, lit their signals at gazing for the first time on one of the works of civilized man.

No land was visible far to the north, but trees appeared just looming above the horizon, showing the shore to be very low. Soundings were fast decreasing meanwhile. They ran from noon until evening along a sandy beach, and when twilight showed them nothing but the misty outlines of low mangrove swamps, the anchor was dropped. Early in the morning Flinders took the ship a little further, and then went on in a boat to examine the head of the gulf. It was just like the head of Spencer's Gulf; probably a little more cheerful-looking; but in other respects the resemblance was complete. There were the same wide mud flats

covered with water and fish, and hidden by birds and mangroves; the same saltness of the water where the sides of both shores unite. In point of richness of soil, it exceeds the other gulf; and the little piece of country below Mount Lofty, on which the city of Adelaide stands, is a plain of wondrous fertility, grassy, and studded with just trees enough to make it look like a park. Flinders could not get nearer than within half a mile of the shore, and even this was in a channel amid the mangroves. The banks were made up almost entirely of small shells above high-water mark. Above these the shore soon rose in undulating hills to grassy ground, and the several clumps of trees gave the land a pleasing appearance from the water-side.

Having with difficulty effected a landing, the boat's crew set off in the afternoon for a hill, named Hummock Mount, standing north from them about eight miles. They could not, however, manage to reach it, because they had made no preparation for staying one night on shore. There was a smaller and nearer hill, which Flinders ascended to obtain a view of the whole inlet. Nothing new was ascertained by this means. The opening was almost wholly occupied by flats, which seemed to be sandy in the eastern part, and muddy in the westward. The hill upon which he stood was poor soil, with little grass. He found that the Mount Lofty range passed within a few miles of Hummock Mount, and appeared to be more sandy; but the wood upon it was abundant, and of a larger growth. Between the two ranges he saw a broad valley, swampy at the bottom. Into this the water from both ranges appeared to run down in rainy weather, and discharge itself thence into the gulf. This was the only sign of fresh water of a river which occupied the head of this deep indentation of the land. Flinders thought also that he saw one or two hills which had been points in his survey on the other side of Yorke's Peninsula. At any rate, he was now convinced that the eastern ridge which rises at Cape Jervis was the same as that which he had seen at the other gulf, and whose near summit had been ascended and named Mount Brown, and

whose furthest point north was named Mount Arden. The distance he estimated at more than three hundred miles, but the range extends much further than even that. From the station on the western hills of the new inlet across to Spencer's Gulf the distance was not more than thirty miles; but as Flinders did not ascend the highest part of the range, the water to the westward could not be seen. Had the Hummock Mount been within their reach, its elevation (1500 feet) would have given a fine view both of the peninsula and the country to the northward.

In honour of one of the Lords of the Admiralty the inlet was named Gulf St. Vincent. To the peninsula the family name of Lord Hardwicke (Yorke) was given. This piece of land is singular in its form, bearing some resemblance to a very ill-shaped leg and foot. The length of the southern part from Cape Spencer to Troubridge Shoal is about forty-five miles, and from thence northward to where the peninsula joins the mainland, about sixty miles. Its least breadth is from the head of Hardwicke Bay to Investigator Strait, where it appears to be not more than nine miles.

The *Investigator* touched again at Kangaroo Island on her return, but examined no more of the coast than that portion which lies opposite Cape Jervis. The passage on this side, between the island and mainland, is not more than seven miles wide at the narrowest part, and as it formed a sort of private entrance to Gulf St. Vincent, it was named Backstairs Passage. The small bay where the vessel anchored was named Antechamber Bay, and its principal cape, Cape Willoughby. This cape is now better known by the fine lighthouse which stands upon it. The whole of this gulf and the surrounding features have assumed much subsequent importance. Thus Yorke's Peninsula, as already stated, contains some of the richest copper mines in the world, at which the wealth of other deposits, or the veins of the Oural mountains, fade into insignificance. Mount Lofty towers over the pretty city of Adelaide, and Kangaroo Island has been the calling-place for the Peninsular and Oriental mail

steamers, in their passage between Suez and Melbourne.

Outside Backstairs Passage there are three very small barren granite islands, which are named The Pages. They lie near a bay which was a remarkable one in the voyage: it was there that Flinders met the French discovery ship, under Admiral Baudin. It is important to give the very words of Flinders, in relating what passed between them, because a most unworthy effort was made by the French Government to wrest from the commander of the *Investigator* the credit of the discoveries he had made. The quotation is for other reasons of the highest interest, and serves as a good picture of the terms upon which navigators stood, whose respective nations were exhausting themselves in a deadly struggle.

"Before two in the afternoon," says the narrative, after describing The Pages, "we stretched eastward again, and at four a white rock was reported from aloft to be seen ahead. On approaching it nearer, it proved to be a ship, standing towards us, and we cleared for action in case of being attacked. The stranger was a heavy-looking craft, without any topgallant masts up, and our colours being hoisted, she showed a French ensign, and afterwards our English Jack forward, as we did a white flag. At half-past five, the land being then five miles distant to the north-eastward, I hove to, and learned, as the stranger passed to leeward with a free wind, that it was the French exploring vessel *Le Géographe*, under the command of Captain Nicholas Baudin. We veered round as *Le Géographe* was passing, so as to keep our broadside to her, lest the flag of truce should be a deception; and having come to the wind on the other tack, a boat was hoisted out, and I went on board the French ship, which had also hove to. As I did not understand French, Mr. Brown the naturalist went with me in the boat. We were received by an officer who pointed out the commander, and were by him conducted into the cabin. I requested Captain Baudin to show me his passport from the Admiralty, and when it was found, and I had perused it, I offered

mine from the French Marine Minister, but he put it back without inspection." (Englishman surly, and Frenchman courteous, even at the Antipodes.) "He then informed me that he had spent some time in examining the south and east parts of Van Diemen's land, where his geographical engineer, with the largest boat and a boat's crew were left, and probably lost. In Bass's Strait, Captain Baudin had encountered a heavy gale, the same we had experienced in a less degree on March 21, in Investigation Strait. He was then separated from his consort ship, *Le Naturaliste*, but having since had fair winds and fine weather, he had explored the south coast from Western Port to the place of our meeting, without finding any river, or the large island said to be at the western entrance of Bass's Strait.

"Captain Baudin was communicative about his discoveries about Van Diemen's Land, as also of his criticisms upon an English chart of Bass, published in 1800. He found great fault with the north side of the strait, but commended the form given of the south side, and the islands near it. On my pointing out a note upon the chart, explaining that the north side of the strait was seen only in an open boat by Mr. Bass, who had no good means of fixing either latitude or longitude, he appeared surprised, not having before paid attention to it. I told him that some other and more particular chart of the strait and its neighbourhood had been since published, and that if he would keep company with my ship until next morning, I would bring him a copy, with a small membir belonging to them. This was agreed to, and I returned with Mr. Brown to the *Investigator*.

"It somewhat surprised me that Captain Baudin made no inquiries concerning my business upon this unknown coast; but as he seemed more desirous of communicating information, I was happy to receive it. Next morning, however, he had become inquisitive, as some of his officers had learned from our boat's crew that we were also on a voyage of discovery. I then told him, generally, what our operations had been, particularly in the two gulfs, and the latitude to which I had ascended in the largest. I explained the situation of Port Lincoln,

where fresh water might be procured; showed him Cape Jervis, which was still in sight; and as a proof of the refreshments to be obtained at the large island, pointed out the kangaroo skin caps worn by my boat's crew, and told him the name I had affixed to the island in consequence.

"In parting, the captain requested me to take care of his boat and people, in case of meeting with them, and to say to the *Naturaliste* that he should go to Port Jackson as soon as the bad weather set in. On my asking the name of the captain of *Le Naturaliste*, he bethought himself to ask mine, and finding it to be the same as that of the author of the chart he had been criticising, expressed not a little surprise, and politely congratulated himself on meeting me.

"The situation of the *Investigator*, when I hove to for the purpose of speaking Captain Baudin, was 35° 40′ S., and 138° 58′ E. No person was present at our conversations, and they were mostly carried on in English, which the captain spoke so as to be understood. He gave me besides what is related above, some information as to his losses in men, separating from his consort, and of the proper seasons at which he was directed to explore this coast; as also, a memorandum of some rocks which he had met with in lat. 37° 1′ (off Cape Jaffa), and he spoke of them as very dangerous.

"I have been more particular," continues Flinders, "in detailing all that passed at this interview, from a circumstance which it seems proper to explain and discuss in this place. At the above given latitude and longitude, the discoveries made by Captain Baudin upon the south coast have their termination to the west, as mine, in the *Investigator*, have to the eastward. Yet Mons. Peron, naturalist in the French expedition, has laid a claim, for his nation, to the discovery of all the parts between Western Port in Bass's Strait, and Nuyts' Archipelago; and this part of Australia is called Terre Napoleon. My Kangaroo Island, a name which they openly adopted in the expedition, has been converted at Paris into L' Isle Decrés. Spencer's Gulf is called Golfe Bonaparte; the Gulf St. Vincent, Golfe Josephine; and so

along the whole coast to Cape Nuyts; not even the smallest island being left without some similar stamp of French discovery.

"It is said by Mons. Peron, and on my authority, too, that the *Investigator* had not been able to penetrate behind the Isles of St. Peter and St. Francis; and though he does not directly say that no part of the previously unknown coast was discovered by me, yet the whole tenour of his chap. xv. induces the reader to believe that I had done nothing which could interfere with the prior claim of the French. Yet Mons. Peron was present afterwards at Port Jackson, when I showed one of my charts of this coast to Captain Baudin, and pointed out the limits of his discovery; and so far from any prior title being set up at that time to Kangaroo Island and the parts westward, the officers of the *Géographie* always spoke of them as belonging to the *Investigator*. The first lieutenant, Mons. Freycinet, even made use of the following odd expression, addressing himself to me in the house of Governor King, and in the presence of one of his companions, I think Mons. Bonnefoy: 'Captain, if we had not been kept so long picking up shells and catching butterflies in Van Diemen's Land, you would not have discovered the south coast before us!'

"The English officers and respectable inhabitants then at Port Jackson, can say if the prior discovery of these parts were not generally acknowledged; nay, I appeal to the French officers themselves, generally and individually, if such was not the case. How then came Mons. Peron to advance what was so contrary to truth? Was he a man destitute of all principle? My answer is, that I believe his candour to have been equal to his acknowledged abilities, and that what he wrote was from overruling authority, and smote him to the heart, for he did not live to print his second volume."

After this statement it will be unnecessary to dwell longer on Mr. Flinders's claim to be the first discoverer of the country just described. There can be no doubt that the French Government most ungenerously attempted to appropriate the result of his labours. This

was a part of the Napoleon policy, which one recognises so very often in the history of the Emperor's career. Prodigal to the French people, he could never afford to be generous to an enemy; and while he boastfully vaunted the least achievement of his nation, he was capable of the most unprincipled meanness to tarnish the renown of others. It is a pleasure, however, to state now, that no one, French or English, defends Mons. Peron's claims to priority of discovery for his commander.

At the place where the vessels met, Cape Jervis had disappeared, and the coast had become low and sandy, curving round so as to form a large but open bay. As the head of this bay was seen by both ships at the same time, it received the name of Encounter Bay. The succeeding part of the coast having been discovered by the French, Flinders made use of their names in describing it. It must be remarked, however, that the French account of the voyage is not accompanied by charts, and contains but few latitudes and longitudes, so that the bays and capes could not be always identified.

The low sandy shore still continued without any apparent break or inlet, and without any conspicuous object being visible inland. This beach is of all others the most uniformly low and wretched looking in all Australia. A few hummocks show here and there on the top, partially covered with small vegetation, but nothing else breaks the horizon or the solitude unless the awful roaring surf. This beach differs from the coast between Western Point and Cape Howe, in Bass's Straits, for there beautiful inland scenery is visible; it differs also from that between Capes Northumberland and Bridgewater, because there the sands are higher, and mountains appear behind. In fact, it is the worthy outwork of a terrible desert which lies inland, and is as impenetrable as the beach is unapproachable It should, however, be mentioned, that a great part of this beach is not the true coast. It is a sort of outlying rampart, passing like a wall along a salt-water channel. It is open at the Encounter Bay end, and in the south terminates abruptly. This is the Coorong.

The first break in the land was Cape Benoulli.

It was a well-wooded promontory, and the coast there seemed to rise behind the beach into little hillocks, crowned with black-looking trees. The next bight was Lacepede Bay. It was bounded on the south by Cape Jaffa, which was moderately high land, stretching a long way out to sea. The bay was shallow, and appeared very tranquil. This is its most extraordinary feature. Though it is exposed to almost any wind, but most of all to the only dangerous one, which blows from the north-west, it is generally as smooth as a mill-pond. One reason for this may be its shallowness, and another the dense crop of seaweed with which the bottom is covered. But it is still a remarkable fact to be explained, and one of which coasters along this shore are glad to avail themselves.

Captain Baudin had warned Flinders against certain rocks near Cape Jaffa, which he justly described as most dangerous, because they are completely hidden, and extend about nine miles out from the cape. Flinders, however, did not see them, and mistook for them some rocky islets within the next opening, called Guichen Bay. Flinders says: "About three leagues from the south of the cape is a cluster of low rocks, apparently the same of which Captain Baudin had given me information. They do not, however, lie exactly in the situation expressed in his memorandum, and are not more than two miles from the land. We called them Baudin's Rocks, and since no name is applied to them in Mons. Peron's voyage, the name is continued."

These rocks are remarkable features. Instead of rising from the waters like a reef, they stand out like table-land, in the form of an island. The stone of which they are composed is the loose, drifted sandstone common to the whole coast; and as it is very soft, the island is washed into the most fantastic shapes. In places it forms like arches set upon rugged stone columns; or again it turns out jagged pinnacles, which are thinned to a fine point by the dashing of the spray. The bay inside is picturesque and rocky. There was very little surf upon the south side of the beach,

and here the coast swelled up into rich-looking grassy knolls. On the north side the land was much higher, rising into a mound, densely wooded, and apparently grassy. Flinders gave it no name, but it has since been called Mount Benson.

Four miles beyond the rocks, a sandy point stretched out to sea. It was called Cape Lannes. Beyond this the shore became as sandy as ever. It was true, it was a little higher; but nothing of the country inland was seen. And yet this part of Australia is far more fertile than that within the beach of Encounter Bay. There the land is all scrub a little distance from the sea, and a scrub so thick, so dense, and so utterly worthless, as to deter all attempts at its exploration. In this part, on the contrary, there is much available land. As soon as the sand dunes of the beach have been crossed, fresh-water lakes make their appearance; and the land, though marshy, supports good grass, and is of rich soil. Here and there, too, limestone ridges start up, clothed with handsome timber, and a green turf, like velvet. All this is to be attributed to the influence of the volcanic hills, which break out on the southern coast.

It will be seen from the map that we have now brought Flinders' exploration to where it touches upon the discoveries of Captain Grant, in the *Lady Nelson*. We therefore hasten on to the only other novelty which remains in this first part of Flinders' expedition. It will be remembered that Grant did not see the coast between Cape Otway and Cape Schanck, in Bass's Strait. He spoke of a great opening there, which he called King George's Sound. Within this lay Port Phillip. It had been discovered by Lieutenant Murray, in the *Lady Nelson*, about ten weeks before Flinders arrived there.

On the 26th April, the *Investigator* arrived off Cape Schanck, and from thence bore away westward, in order to trace the land round the head of the deep bight. On the west side of the point a small opening was seen, with water breaking across it. At first it seemed scarcely worth notice, but in advancing it appeared

more interesting; and Flinders sailed in to obtain a nearer view. A large extent of water presently became visible within; and although the entrance seemed very narrow, and there were strong ripplings, like breakers, he was determined to steer on. Every man was at his post as they approached the broken water. The lead was kept going, but the soundings were quite regular, between forty and seventy feet. They steered through. The water became smooth and shallow, and they found themselves in an extensive harbour. While they gazed around in wonder at the inlet thus opened to them, their vessel stuck fast upon a mud bank, reminding them that first appearances were not the best criteria as to the safety of a port. But the ship was easily got off again, and brought to an anchor in smooth, deep water.

The extensive harbour they had thus found was supposed to be Western Port, although the narrowness of the entrance by no means corresponded with the width given by Bass. This mistake was due to the information derived from Captain Baudin, who said he had coasted along this land, and yet had found no opening of any kind after leaving Western Port. But next morning a very trifling examination convinced Flinders that this could not be, and he congratulated himself upon so useful a discovery, exulting much, we may be sure, at the French allowing such a windfall to come to him. But he did not know, of course, until he reached Sydney, of Lieutenant Murray's visit. Whatever names Flinders gave had to be changed for those of Murray, who had called the whole bay Port Phillip; the rocky point on the eastern side, Point Nepean; and a hill far inland on the same side, Arthur's Seat.

Flinders' observations were, however, new and useful. He found that the western shore extended from the entrance ten or eleven miles in a northerly direction to the extremity of what he then called Indented Head. Beyond this was a wide inlet, which Flinders thought must communicate with the sea; for he could not imagine that so large a bay should have only one outlet, and that such a narrow one.

The inlet here spoken of was Corio Bay, subsequently seen by Messrs. Hume and Hovell, in their celebrated overland journey from Sydney, in 1824, and now the site of a flourishing and beautiful city. The whole aspect of Port Phillip was remarkably good as far as the land that surrounded it. But this could not easily be seen. It was low and very flat. There were some high hills looming in the distance in the west, and others to the north and east, but far more distant still. With these exceptions, the horizon of the shore was not broken, except by an occasional peak jutting, in hazy distance, into the sky.

Flinders found that the soil of this port was superior to any on the borders of salt water which he had had hitherto an opportunity of examining; and to confirm this view, there were many traces which showed it to have been a favourite residence for natives. The first lieutenant was directed to take the vessel back to the entrance, whilst the commander went in the boat, with three days' provisions, to explore as much of the port as he could in that time. Having passed Indented Head, he landed, and sent off three of the boat's crew to the highest part of the back hills, called Station Peak. Their way was over a low plain, where there was but little drainage for the water. It was covered with small, light grass, but almost destitute of wood; and the soil was clayey and shallow. One or two miles before reaching the first of the hills, they entered a wood. They soon saw that there was evidently no communication between the western arm and the sea. They built a small cairn on the top of the peak, and deposited a roll of paper in it, stating the name of the ship and the object and time of their visit. They then returned to the tent, which the rest of the boat's crew had pitched near the beach. Flinders soon found that the bay was too extensive to survey accurately at that time with the means at his disposal. He therefore returned to his ship. This was the first visit to Port Phillip of which there are any published particulars, for Murray's visit does not appear to have ever emerged from the silent tomb of colonial despatches. A great

change has come over the port since then. It now leads up to the capital of the southern hemisphere, Melbourne. No longer does the mournful silence of solitude reign upon the shores; no longer does a single ship fill the savage Australian with vague terrors. The bay is studded over with a fleet of ships, among which are the finest specimens of our commercial navy. The mouth is crossed and recrossed by vessels bearing the golden freights of Victoria's mineral resources. The curling smoke of the native signal-fire is replaced by the puffing clouds of the locomotive engine, as it runs its swift pace between Melbourne and Geelong, and the waves which chafe the shore are increased in their splashing by the beating of screws and paddle-wheels, which ply to and fro; and yet thirty years ago, and for thirty years after Flinders' visit, the place was still a solitude!

After leaving Port Phillip, the *Investigator's* explorations on the southern coast were terminated. He was on his old ground. The man who had begun his discoveries by sailing out from Port Jackson in a boat eight feet long, now sailed in with a large ship, equipped for exploration, and with the first-fruits of his labours upon his charts. The south coast was now unveiled.

It should be here mentioned that a Mr. Reed, in a sealing expedition, made, as he considered, the discovery of the southern part of a large island in Bass's Straits. It afterwards appeared that the northern part had been seen in January, 1801, by Captain Black, of the ship *Harbinger*. The name of King's Island was then given to it. This was the island spoken of by Captain Baudin to Flinders. The French explorer did not believe in its existence, and probably thought it not worth his while to examine whether it did or no. The island lies a little to the west of the entrance to Bass's Straits, and is about one-third the size of Kangaroo Island. It is inhabited.

On Flinders' return to Port Jackson, May 9, 1802, he found at Sydney Cove the second French ship, *Le Naturaliste*, of Baudin's expedition. He communicated

with the commander, Captain Hamelin, and showed him his chart, so that there was no doubt then that Flinders had been the first to explore between Cape Nuyts and Encounter Bay. Why his charts were not published first will be seen when his cruel imprisonment and detention by the French at the Mauritius is related.

CHAPTER VII.

FLINDERS' EXPLORATIONS CONCLUDED.

Flinders on the north-west coast—Broad Sound—The Barrier Reef—Torres Straits—Carpentaria—Wellesley Islands—Sir Edward Pellew's Group—Cape Maria—Bickerton Island—Groote Eylandt—North-west Bay—Bustard Islands—Blue Mud Bay—Caledon Bay—Arnhem's Land—Melville Bay—Cape Wilberforce—Flinders meets with Malay fishermen—Malay Road—Return to Sydney—Flinders sails for England—Shipwreck—Imprisonment—Death—First settlement of Port Phillip, Hobart Town, and Launceston—Buckley the wild man—The explorations of Admiral Baudin's expedition.

IT took some time for Flinders to refit for the second part of his expedition. Considering how long he had been at sea, it would be no wonder if he had remained some months to recruit at Sydney, for there were many things to detain him. His losses in men have been already stated; and now, also, he made the unpleasant discovery that the *Investigator* was very unfit to continue his explorations in. She had been represented as almost a new ship, but it proved, on examination, that she was almost as old as Xenophon himself, her former namesake. But it would have taken a good deal to deter such a commander as Flinders, so he sailed away again on the 22nd July.

His vessel was accompanied by a tender, the *Lady Nelson*, which was now commanded by Lieut. Murray. The object of the voyage was to examine Hervey, Keppel, and Shoalwater Bays, which had been imperfectly seen both by Cook and himself. They were then to proceed with both ships to Torres Straits, and examine the Gulf of Carpentaria.

Of the examination of Hervey Bay little need be said. Flinders had been there before, and what he now saw did not alter his opinion of the sandy and worthless character of the country around. A passage

was found between Breaksea Spit and the coast, and this showed the bay to be in reality a strait. The island was called Great Sandy Island—a very proper appellation.

It will be remembered that Cook had landed at a low part of the coast, which he had termed Bustard Bay. Flinders took the *Investigator* to the same place. A little above the bay a chain of hills was observed, bearing off to the eastward, and near them a small opening. It was not a mile in width, but any chance of the kind was always a signal to steer the *Investigator* towards the shore. Inside there was a large bay, one arm of which was found to sweep round into Keppel Bay, so that Cape Capricorn, the boundary of the tropics, was therefore insulated.

The bays and inlets around this islet were innumerable: they were low and indifferent as places for anchorage. Flinders surveyed them all, and summed up the whole opening by calling it Port Curtis. The country around is settled upon now to some extent, and it has attracted much notice in connection with a disastrous "rush" to a gold-field near it in 1859. No rush probably ever caused so much loss of life and property, and for this alone Port Curtis will be remembered when even Flinders is forgotten, though his name may likewise long survive because of his misfortunes.

The country around the port is overspread with grass and the trees common to this latitude in Australia; but here commences a very fertile part of the coast, whose vegetation is much more luxuriant and rich. The belt of country between Moreton and Keppel Bays appeared to both Flinders and Cook to be very uninviting, and yet in reality it is not so at a short distance from the sea. About twenty miles in the interior the eastern side of the coast range is reached, and a very superior country then commences. The enlivening alluvial flats are, however, occasionally of rich soil. On reaching Keppel Bay the character of the coast country appears suddenly to change. Smooth, swelling downs rise up in gentle undulations to the coast range, which here attains a height of about 1500 feet. The land is of the richest kind, and there is

abundance of it; and what gives it a value—which Flinders, however, did not discover—is, that it contains the River Fitzroy, which is one of the finest of Australian streams, and drains the largest and richest extent of country on the continent. Many new tropical plants are met with which give a new character to the otherwise monotonous uniformity of Australian scenery. Some native fruits are met with: a *Ficus*, yielding gutta-percha, grows on the banks of the river. Several varieties of croton, allied to that which yields cascarilla bark, and also many plants of the cinchona family, among which is a stately deciduous tree; and one presenting a beautiful wood and a yellow dye, the *Oxleyea Leichhardtii*. Keppel Bay is a large basin, affording safe anchorage for vessels of any size. It is well sheltered, and on the north side of Curtis Island there is abundance of fresh water. The southern banks of the Fitzroy consist of extensive mangrove flats, extending towards a hill, which Flinders named Mount Larcom, and the picturesque ranges which bound the southern horizon.* The rocks in this district are clay slate, mica slate, and grey limestone. The whole of the formation is broken through by granite and trap rocks. In the alluvial *débris* of these gold has been found in every direction, but it does not appear as yet to exist in veins.

Of course, one naturally concludes that so beautiful and fertile a place would render Flinders very enthusiastic, and make him give a glowing account of it; but it did not. The fact is, coast explorations are necessarily unsatisfactory; the mariners cannot go far from their ship, and so they see only the worst of shore. Thus Flinders could get but little beyond the mud flats and mangrove swamps of the bay, and this not in the best part, but where there was the best anchorage. Then, when he had waded through slush and slime to firmer land, he had to delay while offsets and sights and bearings were taken. It was only during a pause in the work, or while he snatched a hasty meal, that he could find time to

* Sir C. Nicholson's Report, 1860.

look around; and if there were no rocks and shoals in the sea—which, of course, required the largest share of attention—he looked about him on land. Then, necessarily, the impression was coloured by the appearance of the ground on which he stood, and the finest scenery was set down as sterile, because it was seen from among mangroves, in which the observer was up to his knees in mud.

Many traces of the inhabitants were seen while the party was on shore; and, lest there should be any doubt as to the character of the savages, they gave the explorers a specimen of it as soon as they landed. A small party, who had watched the movement of the boat, retired when the crew disembarked to a high mound which overlooked them. They then, with great deliberation, began throwing stones at the intruders. Fortunately, their audacity excelled their dexterity; but the former was not proof against a few musket shots fired over their heads. Others were seen after that, but they took good care to be out of reach of muskets. It is remarkable how the experience of Captain Flinders showed him what a little was required to defeat these poor savages. In this instance, not a drop of blood was shed upon either side.

On the 18th of August, the examination of Keppel Bay was concluded, and Flinders proceeded upon his journey. As he sailed northward he found numerous islands and rocks. Two of them are of larger size than the rest. Captain Cook had tried to pass between them and the mainland, but found the water too shallow. As the *Investigator* passed outside them, it was observed that they were large and rocky, covered with wood and grass, and many fresh-water gullies leading down into the sea. At the back of the islands the main coast is low and sandy, with occasional rocky heads; but at the distance of two or three miles inland, a moderately elevated wooded chain of hills was visible. This was the scenery up to Cape Manifold.

From that cape the coast suddenly falls back to a sandy beach, and near it are some scattered rocks. The land was low, as usual, but at the north end there was

a hilly projection. As they neared this, Flinders was surprised to see upon it some pines, of the genus *Araucaria*, which was thought to be confined to Norfolk Island.* Pines were also distinguished upon a rocky islet, and behind this there was a deep bight, or port. This was named Port Bowen, and the *Investigator* came to an anchor within it.

Flinders made an excursion round this harbour; for he found when he was within it that it was well worthy of a narrow examination. The scenery was very beautiful. Amid the luxuriance of a tropical vegetation, it was splendid to see the bold cliffs of rock rise up from the shore, crowned with a drooping plumage of graceful dark-green pines. But after describing its beauty, Flinders seemed to think that nothing more could be said in praise of the inlet. It was sandy and barren near the shore, as far as grass was concerned, yet there were many natives about, so that the neighbourhood must have been better than what could have been seen on a boat's cruise.

From Port Bowen the *Investigator* sailed into Cook's Shoalwater Bay, the examination of which possessed scarcely any points of interest. As a bay of refuge it was found to be worthless, and there was no fresh water to be had except at a considerable distance from the shore. The inlet was a mass of mud, surrounded by mangroves on the lower part, and by pines on the higher.

From Shoalwater Bay, Flinders went into Thirsty Sound, and then into Broad Sound, where the monotony of their survey was varied by striking upon a mud bank. No damage was done, however. When the vessel was anchored, a party was equipped as usual to examine the shore. It is very wearisome to have to tell the same old story about mud flats and mangroves, but positively there is nothing else here to describe. There is one little incident, however, which might have happened anywhere else, but since it happened here it is worth telling. The *Lady Nelson*, as already described, was a model ship, and her principal advantages con-

* These pines are of a different species from those in Norfolk Island.

sisted of three long keels, which went down straight into the water like three masts stuck in the bottom. They were made to lift up and down from the deck; but a rock, near Keppel Bay, which the brig had passed over, had saved the crew all further trouble about lifting one of them by neatly shaving it off. This was the central keel. A new one was fitted at Port Bowen, and when the brig anchored at Broad Sound it was intended that she should take the ground as the tide went out. This happened rather rapidly, and when it was wanted to raise the new keel it was so swelled by the wet that it would not come up. It was no good pulling, for while they were tugging away it took the ground. Thus was the vessel left. She turned about violently upon her pivot, dragging both anchors, until the keel broke off, and she came down bump in the mud. There is something original in the idea of a ship pirouetting round thus upon one leg; and spite of the book written in praise of sliding keels, they proved, in the case of the *Lady Nelson*, to be a thorough nuisance.

This Broad Sound was not the nicest place in the world to anchor in; but, fortunately, the bottom was soft, so that a ship would not do much harm by striking. The tide went out rapidly, leaving the usual extensive flats and a noisome smell of salt marshes. When it came in it was with a roaring noise, like a bore along a river, filling the marshes, and making the mangroves appear like an undulated cabbage garden. In coasting along, Flinders had found a little opening, which he proceeded to examine in the boats. At the end of six miles, the small channel led across to the western side. This gave an opportunity of landing, which was, unfortunately, rather rare; so here the tent was pitched, and they prepared to pass the night.

The whole breadth of the sound was now reduced to half a mile. The country around was a stiff clayey flat, covered with grass, and liable to be overflowed at spring tides. Three or four miles to the southward there were some hills, and as these seemed to offer a better camping place, they set off again towards them. The grass, as they walked, was interspersed with a kind

of sensitive-plant, which curled up when it was touched; and this was so marked that the way they had come was traceable for a long time afterwards.

Towards Shoalwater Bay the country consisted of gently rising hills and extensive plains, well covered with wood, and apparently fertile. The stream at the head of the sound could not be traced more than three or four miles above the tent. Behind this there was the usual dividing range of mountains, which here was still granitic, but very low. With the exception of these few facts, absolutely nothing was ascertained about the sound beyond an accurate survey. There was the usual tropical experience of sultry weather, sudden squalls, great heat, and deluges of rain. There was the usual Australian experience of mosquitoes, which defied any attempts at rest on shore. How men should have attempted it, seems marvellous; for sleeping amid salt marshes in such a climate would be certain death in most places. But here it did not cause the slightest inconvenience, and no complaint was made of anything except the dreary prospect of those melancholy swamps, and the mosquitoes by night or the flies by day. I have refrained from mentioning the latter inconvenience as often as it is complained of by the explorers, for it would stop me at every page; but if any one wants to know what the Egyptians must have suffered, let them go to Australia—it does not much matter where—but in the tropics the benefit of a winter cessation of the plague is not to be looked for.

While Flinders was away, he directed his officers to take a complete set of lunar observations, in order to correct the longitude, before proceeding to Carpentaria. On his return to the ship he found that the chronometers had been allowed to run down. As this was a misfortune which it would require a whole week to repair, Flinders started for Thirsty Sound, to correct some points in Cook's charts. On his return he found that the timekeepers had been again suffered to run down. This was very embarrassing; and the patient and calm way in which he speaks of it in his journal is quite edifying. To go away to Torres Straits or the

Gulf of Carpentaria without good rates was to impair the acccuracy of the whole survey; and, on the other hand, the approach of the foul monsoons admitted no further delay in Broad Sound. On comparing the last day's rates with those previously obtained, the letting down did not appear to have produced any material alteration. He, therefore, determined to combine the whole together, and proceed to Torres Straits without further delay.

His first course was to try to get through the Barrier Reef. This extends, with a few interruptions, for nearly a thousand miles. The average distance from the shore is about thirty-four miles, but, in some parts, from sixty to seventy. The great arm of the sea thus included is from ten to twenty-five fathoms deep, with a sandy bottom; but towards the southern end, where the reef is further from the shore, the depth gradually increases to forty. The outer edge of the reef is the highest part. It is traversed by narrow gullies, and, at intervals, by ship channels. The sea, close outside, is profoundly deep.* After examining one or two of the Percy Islands, Flinders attempted to get the *Investigator* outside the reef. It must not be imagined that the latter is like a straight wall, and that inside it the opening is clear. From what we have seen in Cook, we might gather that the channel was full of reefs and shoals, and the barrier itself, instead of running smoothly along, winds and curls into the most fantastic forms, or is broken into islands and shoals of great extent.

On stretching away from the land, reefs were discovered on the 5th October, and no land in sight. Flinders bore away along the inner side of the most northern one. In an hour, its west end was passed; but no sooner was this done when another came in sight. These were not dry in any part, with the exception of some small black lumps, which, at a distance, resembled the heads of negroes. It was soon found that any attempt to navigate among them would only lead the ship into a hopeless labyrinth; and what

* Darwin. "Coral Reefs," p. 47.

delayed her more was the slow sailing qualities of the *Lady Nelson*, which now appeared utterly unfit for a purpose of this kind. He continued, however, to struggle from reef to reef and from channel to channel, often having to pass within a few yards of terrible dangers, and depending for escape upon nothing but the tidal currents. At last, in despair of accomplishing his purpose, he sent the *Lady Nelson* back upon the 18th, and continued his journey with only one ship. This was the commencement of better things, for two days afterwards his ship got through in lat. 19° 9′, long. 148°.

This part of the reef was out of sight of land. It had been seen by Captain Campbell, in 1797, and by Captain Bligh two years after. Before leaving the great barrier reef, Flinders landed upon a part of it, which he described. His account of the beauties he saw is very picturesque, and far too graphic to be omitted here.

The water being very clear round the edges, he says: "A new creation, but imitative of the old, was presented to our view. We had wheat-sheaves, mushrooms, stag-horns, cabbage-leaves, and a variety of other-forms glowing under the water with vivid tints of every shade, betwixt green, purple, brown, and white, equalling in beauty and excelling in grandeur the most favourite pasture of the curious florist. There were different species of coral and fungus, growing, as it were, out of the solid rock, and each had its peculiar shade of colouring. But whilst contemplating the richness of the scene, we could not long forget with what destruction it was pregnant.

"Different corals in a dead state, concreted into a solid mass of dull white colour, composed the stone of the reef. The negro heads were lumps, which stood higher than the rest, and being generally dry were blackened by the weather; but even in these the forms of the different corals and some shells were distinguishable. The edges of the reef, but particularly on the outside, where the sea broke, were the highest parts. Within these were pools and holes, containing live corals and sponges, and sea-eggs and cucumbers

(*Aplysiæ?*), and many enormous cockles (*Chama gigas*) were scattered upon different parts of the reef. At low water, the cockle seems most commonly to lie half open, but frequently closes with much noise, and the water within the shell then spouts up in a stream three or four feet high. It was from this noise, and the spouting of the water, that we were enabled to discover them, for in other respects they were scarcely to be distinguished from the coral rock. A number of these cockles were taken on board the ship and stewed in coppers, but they were too rank to be agreeable, and were eaten only by few. One of them was forty-seven and a half pounds in weight, as taken up, and the animal inside was three pounds two ounces. This size was much inferior to what was found by Captains Cook and Bligh upon the reefs of the coast further northward, or to several in the British Museum, and I have since seen single shells more than four times the weight of the above shells and fish taken together."

It is needless to enter into a detail of how Flinders was baffled in trying to pass the barrier. His efforts were equally creditable to his patience and skill. Place after place was tried in vain; and, considering that a good deal of the sailing was made by night, it is perfectly marvellous how the many dangers were avoided. No wonder that he congratulated himself in being out of soundings, and steering out into the open ocean for Torres Straits.

On the 29th, they sighted Murray Islands, where they anchored. Scarcely had they done so when forty or fifty savages came off in canoes. They would not come alongside of the ship, but lay off at a little distance, holding up cocoa-nuts, joints of bamboo filled with water, plantains, and bows and arrows. A barter was soon commenced, which was carried on in this manner: a hatchet, or a piece of iron being held up, they offered a bunch of green plantains, a bow and a quiver full of arrows, or what they judged should be received in exchange. The savage then leaped overboard and swam to the side of the ship, and made the exchange. They came to the vessel without the slightest fear;

but as these islanders had made a very savage attack upon some vessels about two years previously, Flinders was very cautious in his intercourse with them. They seemed to be quite a different race from the Australians: their canoes were well constructed, and they had sails, of which the natives of the continent seemed not to know the use.

From the Murray Islands, Flinders steered west. He landed upon one of the Cornwallis Islands, half way through the straits; it was little better than a bank of sand upon a basis of coral rock; yet it was covered with shrubs and trees so thickly that in many places they were quite impenetrable. The north-western part was entirely of sand, but there grew upon it numbers of pandanus trees, similar to those upon the east coast. The island was occasionally visited by the natives: this was evident from the relics they had left of their ingenious contrivance of obtaining water upon this arid spot. The process showed more talent for invention than the natives generally display. Flinders had observed round the finest pandanus palm-trees a ring of shells—of *Chama gigas*. He was a long time before he could guess the reason for their being placed there. At last he noticed long slips of bark tied round the stem of a palm-tree, the loose ends of which were led into the shells underneath. By these slips the rain which runs down the branches and stems of the tree is conducted into the shells. Every considerable shower filled them; and as each shell held about two or three pints, forty or fifty of them round a tree would retain a large supply of water.*

* The fruit of the pandanus, as used by the Australians, affords very little nourishment. They suck the bottom part of the drupes or separated nuts, as we do the leaves of the artichoke, but the quantity of food thus obtained is very small and astringent. In the Nicobar Islands, one species appears to afford an important article of food, and the fibre of another species is extensively used for mats, bags, &c., in the Mauritius.—See Flinders, vol. ii. p. 114. Leichhardt says of the same tree: "I frequently tasted the fine looking fruit, but was each time severely punished with sore lips and a blistered tongue, and the first time I ate it I was attacked by a violent diarrhœa. I could not make out how the natives neutralized the noxious properties of the fruit, which, from the large heaps in the camps, seemed to form no small portion of their food. The fruit appeared to have been soaked or roasted, and broken, to obtain the kernels, for which purpose we invariably found large flat stones and pebbles

The little island Flinders named Halfway Island. It was scarcely more than a mile in extent, but appeared to be increasing in elevation. At no very distant period it seemed produced by the washing up of sand and broken coral, of which all reefs afford instances, and those of Torres Straits a great many. These banks, Flinders remarks, are in various stages of progress; some had become islands; some above water-mark, but destitute of vegetation; and others, again, were overflowed by every returning tide, or existed as dangerous reefs just under low water-mark.

On the 31st of October the ship was anchored close to one of the Prince of Wales Islands, which, however, they were hardly able to recognise, from errors of longitude in Captain Cook's charts. They only landed on one of the isles, and this, having previously received its name, was called after a certain Mr. Good. Before disembarking, they thought that they could perceive the tents of natives upon the shores: these were found to be ant-hills, eight feet or more in height. It has been already mentioned how other explorers have been deceived in the same manner. Pelsart found several similar hills upon the west coast, and they were remarked by Dampier, who thought, as usual, that they were huts.*

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to pound them with. I supposed that they washed out the sweet mealy matter between the stringy fibres, and that they drank the liquid as they do the honey, and that their large koolimans, which we had occasionally seen, were used for the purpose. I consequently gathered some very ripe fruit, scraped the soft part with a knife, and washed it until all the sweet substance was out, and then boiled it; by which process it lost almost all its sharpness, had a very pleasant taste, and, taken in moderate quantities, did not affect the bowels. The fruit should be so ripe as to be ready to drop from the tree." —Leichhardt's Overland Journey to Port Essington, p. 100. The species of pandanus are very numerous; they are easily recognised by the thin leaves growing spirally from the trunk, and being in shape like those of the pine-apple; long roots are emitted from the sides of the trunk, for the purpose of holding it down in loose sand, amid which they grow.

* The insects which inhabit these structures are small, sluggish, feeble creatures, in which particular they resemble the white ants on the south coast, which turn up similar nests, but not so large. It is a singular fact that the internal galleries of these nests is a very hard, light substance, of dark brown colour, not at all like the earth from which it is derived. It forms a splendid gravel in gardens, of which one nest will give a cartload. The natives feed very readily upon these insects.

The stone on Prince of Wales Islands appeared to be granite, but there was porphyry and traces of copper. South of these islands the soundings were extremely shallow, even when a low sandy point of the mainland lay eight miles away. Between Cape Cornwall (of Cook) and the same low land is the opening called in the Dutch charts Speult's River. This was Endeavour Strait, which Cook had sailed through. The Wallis Islands described by him are small, low, and rocky, and the most northerly destitute of vegetation. They are surrounded by sandy shoals, which appeared to connect them with the mainland.

The *Investigator* passed Wallis Islands, steering to the south, towards the mainland; but the shoals forced her to the westward. This gave them regular soundings, and they steered southward into the Gulf of Carpentaria. At noon, on the 4th November, they came in sight of the coast. It was sandy and low, like that on the south of Endeavour Strait; so low indeed that it could not be seen at a very short distance out to sea. Behind the shore there appeared to be a little vegetation, but it was totally destitute of anything like a hill. A large opening soon presented itself, but the vessel could not be got near it. Twice Flinders made the attempt; and twice, at three miles from the land, the water became so shallow that the ship would have struck had she been taken nearer.

Yes; this was Carpentaria. Before they went any further, let us see what they had before them. This gulf had long wanted some explorer to clear up its mysteries. There was Tasman's chart; but this left matters wofully in the dark. It was true there was the great opening; but what was the coast around it? There was the boundary line between land and sea; but was it a fine, bold, dashing ocean which cast up its endless noisy surgings against a rock-bound coast, whose frowning cliffs were overhung with the dark luxuriance of a tropical vegetation? or was it the dreary salt marshes of the other gulfs, studded with mangroves, amid which the shallow tide sluggishly glided, or left a muddy ooze half dry to poison the air?

Alas! for poor Australia, what a pity its finest inlets are its discreditable features.

Readers, who form their idea of the Gulf of Carpentaria in connection with the Gulf of Genoa or the Gulf of Lyons, must dismiss such from their minds at once. Indeed, it will be difficult enough to form an idea of the first named without any preconceived notion stepping in to mar the imaginative picture. Take the peculiar characteristics of Australian scenery—that is to say, the dark black foliage of the trees—cull from the tropical flora those plants which best remind you of the heat in which they grow, but not of the richness of the soil, nor of the beautiful flowers which surround them. Put all this in patches of yellow glaring sand; front it with mud flats, with straggling dwarf mangroves above all, and you have the Gulf of Carpentaria as seen from the sea. What! all around that immense inlet? Yes, all round—well, no, not exactly. There are islands breaking in upon the monotony, and there are openings which are proud to call themselves fertile rivers; but the coast does not alter much from Cape York to Groote Eylandt.

But the features of this noisome locality are not exhausted. With an idea of only the sand, the mud flats, and the mangroves, one would form but a very faint conception of the true nature of the gulf. There is the sea and the sky. The former is, of course, muddy in colour, and very shallow. There is only one tide in the twenty-four hours. It takes twelve hours for the tide to flow in, and twelve hours for it to flow out again. As it goes out it leaves a variegated breccia of shells upon the beach; pretty enough were it not that the alligator basks in the slime, and the unwieldy turtle tumbles along in the sand. The sky is either clear and serene, allowing the scorching rays of the sun to come down as probably it does come down in few other places in the world; or it is covered with dense clouds twice a year, sending out deluges of rain. There are occasions, and they are many, when the weather is very squally. Then, thunderstorms, with very strong winds, are sudden and violent. This is

the meteorology of Carpentaria. Between land and sea and sky it is to be hoped that readers can understand the place in which we have very rapidly to follow the first English explorer.

On the 6th, the *Investigator* had a breeze off the land, which carried her until evening along the same low line of coast. Natives were seen for the first time near a small opening. The boats were ordered out, and the captain landed with the naturalist; but the savages ran away with the greatest precipitation. This small opening was marked by the Dutch as the Coen River; but the entrance was too small and narrow to admit anything but boats. In its upper part the country seemed well covered with *Eucalyptus* trees. Near the entrance, however, it was as usual; nothing but bare sand with some scattered trees of *Casuarina* and *Pandanus*. The only rock which did appear was coral concrete.

On the 8th, a variety appeared upon the shore. A sandy point with two hillocks was passed. This was omitted in the Dutch charts, but as it must have been seen by the *Duyphen*, Flinders called it Point Duyphen. Within this there was a bay of the same low land, and beyond it another point, now named Pera, after one of the Dutch vessels, which visited it in 1623. On the 10th they were opposite Cape Kurweer, where the *Duyphen* turned back in 1606. Nothing like a cape was seen, but the coast fell back somewhat behind it. This was in lat. 13° 42′. An opening had been marked near this, which Flinders could not see; but subsequent explorers have found many small creeks opening upon that coast, and therefore it is very possible that the Dutch were right.

The coast now became much lower than before. Not a single hill had been yet seen, and the tops of the trees on the highest land scarcely exceeded the height of the topmast; the depth, too, was so shallow, that when good soundings could be obtained, the tops of the trees were alone visible from the deck. On the 12th, they passed an opening, which corresponded with the Water Plaets of the Dutch charts, but they could not find anything corresponding to the Nassau River, marked in the same

maps in lat. 15° 53′. And yet both these must have existed; but openings could not easily be seen where only the tops of the trees were visible. It is in about this latitude the Mitchell River disembogues, a stream which receives so many tributaries in its course from the table-land.

A few miles south of lat. 16°, the water became so shallow that the *Investigator* was obliged to sail far from the land, so that only the tree-tops could be seen from the masthead. Staten River of the Dutch was thus missed, and Flinders remarks, with surprise, that all the rivers marked by that nation's navigators on this coast must have filled up, or disappeared in some unaccountable manner. Probably this arose from the way in which Flinders expected them to be visible. He must have thought that the mouth of a stream would be as apparent as the entrance to Port Jackson. This also will account for the number of rivers which he missed in his explorations along the east coast. A glance at the map will show how many rivers flow down on the east side of the coast range; and though Flinders was actually engaged in surveying the line of land on either side of them, by some unaccountable obliquity of vision, he never saw them. The fact is, his talent lay in marine surveying, and not in a narrow examination of the features of a newly discovered shore.

As he sailed along, it is a wonder that Flinders saw any opening at such a distance from such low coast. At noon, on the 14th, they were in lat. 17° 3′, with only twenty feet of water under them, though the coast was fully three miles off. This latitude corresponded with a small opening marked as Van Diemen's Inlet, by the Dutch; but they did not go in closer to examine it. It appeared as if closed by a mud bank, which would probably prevent an examination even with boats.

Up to this time Flinders was under the belief that he should find the Dutch charts wrong in every particular, and that instead of a wide shallow gulf, he would discover a strait which might lead very far into

the interior. But the afternoon of this day served, in a great measure, to damp these hopes. The course of the shore was to the westward, and exactly corresponding to the old maps; besides which, the water became more shallow almost every mile they sailed. It was useless to try to examine the coast in the ship. Every day they were obliged to keep further away, until they could scarcely see the land even from the masthead.

On the 17th, however, a change came. A hill was reached. It was a mass of limestone, quite unnoticeable under ordinary circumstances, but here very remarkable, as it was the first high land seen in the course of a journey along the coast of five hundred and thirty miles. The hill proved to be an island. It was opposite what was marked by Tasman as Maatsuyker's River; yet this opening was not a river at all, but the strait which divided the island from the main. The river being abolished, it became necessary to name the island; but Maatsuyker* could not be honoured in this instance, as his ugly name had been conferred upon some island in Tasmania. Sweers was the next name on the list of Tasman's instructions, so the island was so called. The name is not pretty, but it is easily pronounced; and if it would only mean something more characteristic than a Dutchman in knickerbockers, to which the island does not bear the smallest resemblance, the name would do very well.

The strait between Sweers' Islands and the main seemed to afford a good place for an anchorage, if water could be found; and here Flinders determined to fill the hold, and caulk the ship, if he could get a snug berth for the purpose. There were other islands near, Bentinck's Isle and Allen's Isle. Sweers' Island did not possess surface water, so Flinder anchored under Allen's Isle. Here he landed.

It was about four or five miles in length; and though generally barren, there was tolerable grass upon it in places, with bushes and small trees. The land was low, but the south-east end terminated in a cliff, with deeper

* Maatsuyker was one of the counsellors who signed Tasman's instructions in 1644. Sweers was another of the same council of Batavia.

water around it than used generally to be found in this part of the gulf. After taking a set of bearings, Flinders left the naturalists to follow their pursuits, while he rowed to the north, intending to go quite round the island. But this project was soon stopped. A very long impassable reef was found stretching out to sea, so that there was no chance of going round it. There was a smaller island to the eastward, which seemed worth examining, and Flinders went towards it. As he came closer, natives were perceived. The water was too shallow for even the boat to get near them, but he landed at a little distance, and walked after three men who were dragging six small rafts towards the extreme southern rocks, where other natives were sitting. The rafts seemed very important to them, because, rather than abandon them, they submitted to an almost equal evil, which was—an interview with the white men. One of the boat's crew advanced towards them unarmed, and made signs to them to abandon their spears. They understood it, however, as an invitation to sit down, which they did. By degrees, a friendly intercourse was established between them. They accepted some red worsted caps and fillets, as also a hatchet and an adze. The use of the latter they learned very readily. In return, they gave some of their spears. The rafts were miserably constructed; they consisted of several straight, dried branches of mangrove, lashed together with the broadest ends all one way, so as to give it the shape of a fan. Near the broad end was a bunch of grass, where the rower sat to paddle, but it swam so deep that his body was partly under water. Upon one of the rafts was a large open net, apparently intended for catching turtle; upon another was a small shark, and these with their weapons comprised all their worldly riches.

During Flinders' absence, water was found under a hill (named Inspection Hill), on Bentinck's Island. The vessel was anchored there immediately, and the place called Investigator Roads. It has been a very important part of Carpentaria in its subsequent history. It was there that the *Beagle* anchored during the survey of Captain Stokes; and it was there that the *Victoria*

steam-sloop was anchored during the whole of the time that a search was being made for Burke and Wills.

It has been mentioned that it was thought necessary to caulk the *Investigator* while at anchor in this bay. Such a precaution had become very necessary. Every day the leaky state of the ship had been getting from bad to worse, and now it required constant work at the pumps to keep her afloat at all. On the 23rd November, therefore, the ship was removed to within two cables' length of the west point of the island, near to a spring, and an examination of the cause of the leak commenced. As they inspected, report after report was brought to Flinders of rotten places found in various parts of the timbers, until it became quite alarming. At length, he directed such repairs to be made as were indispensable, and to report about the whole state of the ship. The report came in two days. It consisted, not in an examination of the parts of the ship which were rotten, but a very short list of the few timbers which were still sound; in fact, it was a wonder that she kept afloat so long; much longer she certainly would not.

This intelligence surprised and distressed the anxious explorers. It surprised them that a ship in such a state should have been equipped for a long voyage by the Admiralty, pronounced sea-worthy, and every way fit for the service; it distressed them to think how they should ever manage to get home in her. Poor Flinders could not, however, bring himself to turn back at this early stage of his discoveries; but it was evident that he could not stay long. There was a prospect of a continuance of fine weather during the north-west monsoons, and he determined to see that out, at any rate; and then, if the vessel would stand it, to go to Port Jackson, and, if not, to make an attempt to reach the East Indies. There was a good deal of risk in all this, but what had he not risked in the same cause heretofore? He was sanguine as to his success, so he continued his voyage.

The observations made upon the islands were of little interest. The basis rock was an ironstone, and above this was a concreted mass of sand, shells, and

corals; over all was either sand, vegetable mould, or a mixture of both. These appeared to be the constituents of all the islands; but there were, of course, local variations. Water was obtained by digging to a moderate depth on Bentinck's Island. There was a small growth of trees and bushes—*Eucalyptus*, *Casuarina*, and *Pandanus*—but very little vegetation in the form of grass; and yet the botanists made fine harvests of new species of plants upon these islands. No land animal nor reptile was seen.

Natives there were in abundance, but they always avoided the explorers, and sometimes disappeared in a manner which seemed quite extraordinary. This mystery was explained before the crew left the island. They found caves for concealment dug into the ground; sometimes with two compartments in them, each large enough for a man to lie down in.

It is worthy of remark, also, that some of the natives seen at these islands had lost two of their front upper teeth. This deformity is always adopted by the men, on arriving at the age of puberty, at Port Jackson. But it is singular that no such custom prevails among the coast tribes, north or south, until it reappears upon the north coast. It is practised, too, among the north-western tribes; and besides appearing at intervals on the south coast, it is found here and there among the inland tribes. The object of this custom is unknown.*

On Sweers' Island several skulls and some human bones were found lying together near three extinguished fires. There were also some other relics, which excited much attention at the time. Thus, a piece of teak-wood, which had evidently formed part of a ship's deck, and the stumps of about twenty trees, which had been cut down with an axe or some sharp iron instrument. What these signs could mean, they

* I once knew a black fellow of Mount Gambier, who was one of the very few of his tribe who were thus disfigured. He told me that it signified that he had killed his enemy and eaten him. The rite of circumcision is also practised by most of the natives of the north coast; but this they may have derived from the Mahommedan Malays which visit the coast. Not that this is very probable, for the Australian savage is very conservative, and rarely introduces new ceremonials.

were quite at a loss to guess. They were too recent to have been done by the Dutch; neither were there sufficient signs to warrant them in supposing that there had been a wreck here. And yet it was almost certain that no European visitors had come on an exploring expedition. A little later this mystery was explained. The whole of the marks had been left by the Malays, who occasionally visit this part of the coast. How Flinders discovered this fact will be related presently.

On the 1st December, the ship was got under weigh, in order to get in with the mainland, to the west of Bentinck's Island. But the water was still too shallow. They then steered north-west; and at noon Cape Van Diemen was in sight, supposed to be part of the mainland. It proved, however, to be an island, which was distinguished by the name of Mornington Island; and the whole of the group around it was called Wellesley's Islands. One of these proved a most valuable resource to the ship's crew, from the immense number of turtles and turtles' eggs which were there procured. It was, in gratitude, named Bountiful Island. The manner in which these creatures abounded was perfectly marvellous. They were first noticed on the beach; and very much disappointed were the sailors, who leapt out of their boats to seize them, and found them lying upon their backs, dead and rotten, having fallen into that position, and perished miserably in trying to climb the steep cliffs of the island.* But there were plenty without these. Several were swimming about the boat, three of which were easily secured, and might have been secured still more easily; for Flinders tells us dolefully that the men broke his harpoon without the smallest necessity. Upon landing, the upper part of the beach was seen to be full of holes; the men were not long applying hands to their further investigation. From one alone they filled a hat with turtles' eggs. The others afforded quite as large a supply.

* A fact for the notice of geologists. These animals' remains would be, in course of time, buried in the mud and silt, to be hereafter dug out as fossils. Should a question arise how so many of one kind of fossil were found together, or why the ventral part of the fossil carapace was always upwards, here the answer is seen. I believe there are such facts in geology.

What a blow to the unpublished generations of Carpentarian turtles! It appeared, however, that the sailors were not the only enemies which these unhappy chelonia had to complain of. The island was covered with small birds about the size of a hen (a kind of bustard), and their business was to find an opening for a young turtle (in his shell), through which he was remorselessly devoured. As soon, therefore, as the turtle emerged from the egg, and awoke to the realities of life, he had to run down to the beach as fast as a turtle could be supposed to go, and plunge into the water; otherwise he fell a victim. But he was not safe even here. Tiger sharks were numerous, and so voracious that they could be caught with a bare hook; these were quite ready to propose another opening to young turtles—ay, and old ones, too; for Flinders tells us that one full-grown turtle was caught which had lost a circular piece out of his shell, equal to one-tenth of his bulk, which had been bitten out of its side. Truly, it is a wonder that, between bustard, sharks, and ships, there is such a repository for these reptilia as Bountiful Island. One word, however, on behalf of the sharks: unless the evidence was very clear that the piece of shell was bitten out, and not knocked out, I should certainly incline to acquit any mouth, except the mouth of a river in flood; and unless the bites were known to be a shark, it would, at any rate, afford a much stronger case against an alligator.

The island was nearly three miles long, and generally low and sandy. The highest parts were ridges of sand, overspread with long, creeping, coarse grass, which binds the sand together, and prevents its being blown away. Other grasses grew in lower parts of the island; but in only one place were there any shrubs and trees. There were no signs that the land had ever been visited by the natives; but as the distance from Mornington Island was about twelve miles, this is easily accounted for, taking into consideration the wretched rafts they possess.

The examination of these isles occupied until the 7th December, on which day they sailed away with

forty-six turtles, sprawling on their backs in the hold, the smallest weighing 260 lbs., and the heaviest 300 lbs. Mornington Island was the largest of the isles; it had white cliffs on a sandy beach upon its north side; but the south was as sandy and barren as the other islands. The mainland, from the islands to the anchorage, on the 8th, was of the same description as that along which they had previously sailed, for now nearly six hundred miles. Need it be said, again, that the shores were low and woody, fronted by a lower sandy or muddy beach. There were some slight wavings in the coast line, but so slight that no part of it could be used twice as a bearing-point in the survey. But a change was beginning to appear inland, at least: a range of low hills were perceived, and now at last the shore showed some sinuosities.

At sunset, a small hillock was seen in the latitude corresponding with the Van Alphen River of the Dutch; but, as Flinders thought, a sandbank stretching across made it inaccessible from the sea. Next day, the coast tended slightly northward, and the vessel passed along it until about eight in the evening. At that time the depth diminished suddenly from three-and-a-half to two-and-a-half fathoms; and before the helm could be put down, the ship struck upon a rock, and hung abaft: an awful shock this was to a captain who knew his ship's timbers to be only kept afloat by the mere forbearance of the water. The sails were kept full, and the ship appeared for a time irresolute, and then swung into deep water. Fancy how all the crew drew a deep breath!—but not for long. Bump again went the ship, and every timber cracked and rattled like windows in a thunder-storm. But she swung off this again; and, with one more slight touch or graze for her keel, she was kept in deep water, and sailed on. Fortunately the water was very smooth at the time, and no great damage was done. The vessel leaked as much as ever, but not more.

Their distance from the shore next morning was about three miles. It was very low, and broken with dry rocks and banks, and in the space of five or six

miles they counted five small openings, behind which lagoons were seen. Abel Tasman's River was marked about this place, but no large stream could be observed. Possibly Tasman's River and the Roper are identical; the latter was not discovered until many years afterwards by Leichhardt, and its mouth is, as yet, quite unknown.

On the 12th, they closed in with higher land than any they had yet seen. This proved to be an island, and was called Vanderlin's Island; it was one of a group which was named after Sir Edward Pellew. The space occupied by this group was considerable, and took some time for its complete examination. One of the islands afforded good shelter, besides wood and water, and the vessel was anchored within a small harbour for some days. While astronomical observations were made on board the ship, Flinders went upon a boat excursion round the islands.

They afforded considerable interest as far as the naturalists were concerned, and in other respects were important. Even some degree of beauty must be attached to them, as they afforded a subject for Westall's pencil, which is one of the prettiest pieces of scenery in Flinders' book. There is a fine, bold, rocky foreground, supporting a luxuriant growth of large-leaved shrubs over trailing creepers. Beyond these again, six tall cabbage palm-trees raise their tapering graceful stems, telling the tropical nature of the country beyond all mistake. Finally, in the distance, rise the bright sands or serrated hills of the islands, which, from their remoteness, look picturesque and as undisturbed as the placid sea which gently heaves between.

None of the islands were fertile, though the soil was an improvement on its neighbours of the gulf; and there was an abundance of trees and shrubs. The latter were, as usual, principally *Eucalypti*, but small, and those on the east coast of different species. The cabbage-palm was also a new species, called by Mr. Brown, the *Livistonia inermis*. It was abundant; but the cabbage (the heart of the young budding

leaves) too small to be useful as an article of food, at least, to a ship's company. But the leaves were found useful. These dried and drawn into strips were plaited into hats for the men, and to this day the cabbage-tree hat is very highly esteemed by the Australians, as a protection from the sun, and allowing free ventilation.* A nutmeg was found upon Vanderlin's Island, growing upon a large spreading bush. Its quality could not be estimated, for it was not ripe when found. Amongst a hundred other novelties which these islands afforded, one more need only be mentioned: this was a species of sandalwood; another of which is also known to occur in Western Australia. Its value has never been investigated, because no further visit has ever been made to these islands, except, perhaps, by a vessel of war for a day or so. And yet, in many respects, they form the most important part of the Gulf of Carpentaria. All the larger islands seemed to possess the kangaroo, but the species was small. In the woods were hawks and pigeons, bustards and ducks; but there were no turtles. Their tracks were seen, however, and one or two places met with where the natives had evidently regaled themselves like aldermen. Both large and small islands were visited by the natives. Two canoes were found on the shore. They differed from the rafts or the canoes of Port Jackson, being much better made. They were composed of strips of bark laid over one another, like clinker-built ships, and were sewed neatly enough to make them water-tight.

Amongst other things found upon these islands was a very singular native monument, which could not be explained, and was like nothing else that had been hitherto seen upon the coast. Under a shed of bark were set up two cylindrical pieces of stone, about eighteen inches long, which had been taken from the beach, evidently made smooth by rolling on the shore, and were shaped like a ninepin. Round them were drawn on each end two black circles, and between

* A good cabbage-tree hat, though it very much resembles a common straw hat, will fetch as much as £3.

these, four oval black patches, carefully made with charcoal. The spaces between the oval marks were covered with white down and feathers, apparently stuck on with the yolk of a turtle's egg, many shells of which lay about. The only explanation of this singular memorial was, perhaps, that it was a mortuary monument. To settle this question, the ground was dug all round, but nothing was found. It was not, however, certain that it was the work of natives, for here again were seen the indications of the visit of some foreign people. Besides pieces of earthen jars, and trees cut with axes, the explorers found remnants of bamboo lattice-work, palm-leaves sewed with cotton-thread into Chinese hats, and the remains of some blue cotton trowsers. A wooden anchor, with one fluke, and three boat rudders of violet wood, were also found.

The ship was occupied in obtaining wood and water until the 27th December, when she again sailed along the coast. It had not as yet altered much from its character hitherto, except that in places it was rocky. On the last day of the year, 1802, they sighted Cape Maria. This was found to be an island. To the west of it was marked a large bay or bight, called by the Dutch, Limmen's Bight, where the coast turns north-east to a projecting cape, which had a shoal forty miles in length running out from it. Between this shoal and Cape Maria, a small island was laid down. In these particulars, Tasman's chart was found to be quite correct.

The length of the island was about seven miles, by a variable width of from one to four miles. A slaty rock formed its basis, and the surface was hilly, covered with wood and grass growing up from among the loose stones. Notwithstanding its barren soil, the appearance from the ship was green and pleasant. It was inhabited, and many a curling column of smoke showed that the explorers were also an object of attention from the natives. It was cheering to see a sign of life, even though that life were so extremely savage. For no conception can be gathered of what the solitude of this place must have seemed to the first explorers. The low, slimy, desolate nature of the main was gloomy

enough; but then, to come on island after island, all deserted and lonely, to see the only beauties of nature, with such richness of animal creation, and to recognise, too, that man was excluded from it all, made the place wearisome from its combination of solitudes.

In steering on to Groote Eylandt, many small isles were found, upon one of which, Bickerton's Island, Flinders again landed with the naturalist. He found several fresh plants, and a lake of beautiful water—unfortunately the first feature of the kind which they had met with since rounding Cape York. Another island was called Chasm Island, in consequence of the large chasms noticed in the rocks upon it. In the steep sides of these were deep holes or caverns undermining the cliffs, upon the walls of which were found rude drawings made with charcoal and something like red paint, upon the white ground of the rock. These drawings represented porpoises, turtles, kangaroos, and a human hand. Mr. Westall, who went afterwards to see them, found the representation of a kangaroo, with a file of thirty-two persons following after it. The third person of the band was twice the height of the others, and held in his hand something resembling the wooden sword of the natives of Port Jackson.

It will be seen, as this history goes on, that such drawings and paintings have been found in great numbers upon the north and west coast. They always have a red hand amid other figures, and some of them are well executed and highly coloured. They are, evidently, of great antiquity, and refer to a time when these savages wore clothes, because some of the figures are draped in a long tunic from head to foot. It is singular, too, that the aborigines of the present day never attempt drawing of any kind upon the caves around them.

No natives were seen upon any of the islands, though much smoke was observed, and the skeletons of some standing upright were found in the hollow stumps of trees, with the skulls and bones smeared red and white.

The situation of the bay in which Groote Eylandt occurs, led Flinders to give it the name of North-West Bay. There were many other islands besides the large one, all consisting of a close-grained red sandstone, with large quartz grains embedded. Wherever the explorers landed, the surface was so very stony that the soil was completely hidden; yet at a little distance inland, there were gentle elevations which were well clothed with timber. The central hill of Groote Eylandt appeared to be about eight hundred feet high, and about nine miles from the shore. To the west of the islands an extensive bay occurred in the coast, and some islands outside the Bustard Island made the shelter very complete.

So deep was the bay that no land could be seen at the bottom. Flinders, as may be imagined, steered in with no small interest. Here was, probably, a great river; but, if not, at any rate, there would be an opportunity to land, which would be the first given by the main shore since the ship had left the east side of the gulf. A very short distance showed them that they could not expect a river, but it was a fine bay which stretched round in the far distance, to a mountain named Mount Grindall.

A party of men were sent off to cut wood the next morning, and others to haul the *seine*, while the botanist went about the shrubs, and Flinders took his bearings. Every one was armed, because the shore seemed inhabited, though they were on one of the islands. As Flinders returned to the rest of the men, he saw them following some natives, and, on inquiry, he heard they had given chase to Mr. Westall. On attempting to parley with them, they made a sudden attack upon Mr. Whitelock, a petty officer, and as his gun missed fire they plunged four spears into his body. This time the natives escaped untouched; but upon their attempting to renew the contest in the evening, two were shot dead as they were paddling away in their canoes. The canoe was of bark, but not of one piece as at Sydney, but of two sewed together lengthwise. The two ends were also sewed up, and made tight

with gum. Before leaving this island, a man named Morgan died in a few hours from the effects of a sun stroke, and hence the island received his name.

The bay was seen from the island, and its general character well made out. It was evident from the extreme shallowness of the water that it did not receive any stream of consequence. The land seemed to rise very gradually from the water, very different, however, from the rest of Carpentaria, for it seemed well wooded and actually fertile. It was named Blue Mud Bay, from the nature of the bottom.

The survey of the bay lasted until the 26th, when they sailed past Mount Grindall. The bight extended beyond this, and a small running stream was found near, terminating in a swamp. Flinders went to the top of the mount. The view was extensive. He had but to cut down some few trees which hindered the prospect, and then he looked down upon a finely diversified scene, in which the island he had left formed the principal part. It was not exactly what one could call a fine view, unless the island had been more fertile and the land better grassed, but it was better than the rest of Carpentaria; better than that eternal low land and mud, which possessed only one redeeming point, and that was that there was no eminence amid it all, whence all its deformity could be perceived in one view.

The top of the mount consisted of the same sandstone, with particles of quartz, as that seen at Groote Eylandt; but the shore was different. There was granite, with large scales of mica, which sparkled very much. There was very little soil upon the surrounding land, the surface being either sandy or stony. It was, however, pretty well covered with grass and wood, and amongst the trees was a new species of *Eugenia*, which supplied the boat's crew with abundance of what the sailors called apples. Not that the fruit bore the slightest resemblance to apples, but some latitude must be allowed to the men, since Flinders called all the natives Indians, both names being given much upon the principle which made our forefathers call all foreigners Frenchmen.

On the 2nd February they saw two islands, marked by the Dutch on their chart, lying off a projection named Point Grey. The land from Mount Grindall to this cape was a mere succession of sand-hills, with shallow bights between them. The hills further back seemed better covered with wood, but still barren. Off the coast, further west, were islands and rocks out of number. To describe them all would be like writing a dictionary. It is likewise useless to tell the points and capes, and bluffs and promontories off which they lay. To say all that was done by the crew meanwhile would be to realize again the tedium of Flinders's labours. But they were not light or trifling, as the number of bearings or the information contained in the charts can amply testify. What made it, if anything, somewhat more exciting to the actual explorers, was the leaky and rotten state of the ship, which kept them from day to day in a wholesome state of excitement and active preparation for any disaster which might happen. To say that all this required courage, zeal, and immense patient coolness, will be to repeat what is well known; but, at least, the interest yet lingering about their researches will be the best answer to the question why they risked it still.

The next bay they came to was named Caledon Bay. The country around it was low, with one or two higher hills projecting. One of them—Mount Caledon—was granite, but the rest was the usual red-grained sandstone. The land seemed poor, but was well timbered, and what made it seem better in the eyes of the explorers, was the large number of natives seen about. These were shy, but at length disposed to communicate, in return for which condescension they stole an axe and a musket. Flinders detained one of them for two days, in the hope of getting back the missing articles, but the blacks valued their novelties a great deal more than they did their companion, so Flinders released him. All those who came to the tent had lost the upper front tooth on the left side, while at Port Jackson it is the right tooth which is knocked out. Only one woman was seen, and this at a distance. She wore a piece

of bark, while the men wore no covering at all; but they usually had a bandage of network round the arm, in which was stuck a short piece of strong grass, which they used as a toothpick. All the natives here seemed to have undergone the rite of circumcision.

In this bay they obtained renewed evidence of the occasional visits of some strangers; and from the gestures of the natives it was apparent that they had seen firearms used before. They imitated the act of shooting, and when Flinders first landed they made signs to fire his musket, without the least appearance of alarm. Under these circumstances it was rather unfortunate that they should have stolen a weapon whose use they so well understood, especially when there was a chance of their getting powder from the strangers, whoever they might be. A quantity of posts were found lying near the water, which had evidently been cut down with sharp iron instruments; and when the explorers inquired about them, the blacks imitated the motion of an axe with their hands, and then stopping, frequently exclaimed "Pooh!" If they did not mean the same as we should by such an exclamation, it was evident, at all events, that they held the strangers in contempt.

Flinders sailed on the 10th February, and at daylight next morning the shore was found to be four or five miles distant. The furthest part then visible was near the eastern extremity of Arnhem's Land, and this, having no name in the Dutch chart, was called Cape Arnhem. From Caledon Bay to this cape there is nearly thirty miles of waving sandy coast. Only one opening was noticed in it. This was on the south side of a cliffy point, with two small islets lying off it. At noon, the furthest land visible was a flat-topped hill, which was called Mount Saunders; and near it was one still flat-topped, but higher, steep on its north side, and covered with trees. This was Mount Dundas. These table-hills showed that they had left the low sands of Carpentaria, and were now renewing the bold declivities of the eastern cordillera. Central Australia was commencing to reveal its character, and these flat-

topped hills, which seemed so new and so agreeable to the explorers, after coming round such a level and monotonous shore, would, in turn, have become monotonous and weary had they pursued their researches much further. Beyond these mounts the coast took a northerly direction. This made a bay on the shore, at which Flinders and his botanist landed.

There was nothing very unusual in this opening —called Melville Bay. It is worth while remarking the names of Saunders, Melville, and Dundas, with which Flinders was so anxious to honour one of the Lords of the Admiralty; and yet this very lord was, about this time, misappropriating the Admiralty funds, and it was probably owing to such misappropriation that Flinders, with all his self-sacrifice for his nation, had only a few rotten planks between him and eternity. This harbour had been unnoticed by the Dutch, though it was the finest they had met with in Carpentaria. It must, however, be admitted that, though true, yet the bay is a most undesirable one. Beyond a low isthmus in it, a piece of water was seen communicating with the south-eastern part of the bay, and making a peninsula of some high rocky land, named Drummie Head. At high water this was an island.

The shore on the north side of Melville Bay was granite, with coarse garnets, which were large, and gave the stone a plum-pudding appearance. Over the granite was some fine calcareous rock. The rocks were clayey or slaty on the south side, and on this and the eastern side was the only rich soil about the bay, though in general it was well grassed; better, in fact, than any place hitherto seen by the explorers. The trees were finer and of different species from that of the south of the gulf. A sandalwood was also found, nearer allied to the wood of commerce than what had been already procured. Altogether this bay seems to be one of the most desirable which Flinders had met for Europeans to settle upon. On the 16th they quitted it, passing its most northerly promontory, which was named Cape Wilberforce.

After passing the above cape, the examination of

the Gulf of Carpentaria was completed. It had taken a long time to survey it all—its bay and islands—in all one hundred and five days; and yet, when the extent of this great inlet is considered, it is certainly a wonder that it was finished so soon. The length of this bay is nearly five hundred miles, its width averaging nearly three hundred; while its circuit, including its little channels and openings, is nearly twelve hundred miles. These dimensions are probably not well understood unless they are made clear by some illustration from the home country. Well, suppose a gulf as long as from the Isle of Wight to Aberdeen, and as wide as from the Land's End to the mouth of the Thames—this would be something near the size of Carpentaria. If America boasts of having large rivers, at least Australia may boast of having something like what may be called a gulf, and we may speculate how long it will be before such an extent of country is made use of. We might locate nations, and these without risk of inconvenient crowding; and an individual at Cape York, paying a visit to a friend at Sweers' Island, would undertake a greater voyage than from London to York; but, unfortunately, the scene would not change very much, and at either place he must have a powerful eye for the picturesque if he could enjoy the prospect.

It may be remarked, says Flinders, that the form of the gulf given in the old charts was not very erroneous, proving them to have been the result of a real examination. This certainly was not the general opinion. As no particulars were known of the discovery of the south and west parts, nor the name of the author (though, with great probability, ascribed to Tasman), the chart was considered as little better than a representation of Fairy Land.

After leaving the narrow passage between Cape Wilberforce and Bromby's Islands, the *Investigator* steered along the coast to the south-west. Some high islands prevented a view very far ahead; and while endeavouring to peer among them to discover a passage, a sight met Flinders's telescope which rather astonished him. Crusoe's surprise at seeing the footstep in the sand was

nothing to his. There, in the most lonely part of Carpentaria, where even natives had disappeared, and where the sight of an animal moving seemed almost supernatural—there, under a rock close by one of the islands, a Chinese boat full of men was perceived. Flinders knew from the signs he had met with, that some Asiatics must have been upon the coast at no very remote period; but he no more dreamt of meeting them than of meeting a parish beadle. And, to say the truth, he would much rather not have met them. There were ugly stories afloat as to the honesty of Chinese boats in much more civilized seas than the one he was upon. His ship was armed, it was true; but fighting was disagreeable under any circumstances, especially in a rotten ship. And even if these strangers were pirates, and did not attack them, it would require such an amount of attention to watch them that the survey would be ended.

These were Flinders' feelings as the *Investigator* glided towards the place where the boat was lying; and a nearer view did not tranquillize him. As he rounded the point his anxiety was considerably increased. It was not one boat, but he now beheld six lying snugly covered like hulks, and anchored at some distance from the shore. But for the report of the natives, about their having firearms, he might have been off his guard; but he now set them down as a set of piratical cruisers, who secreted themselves here from pursuit, and issued out as the season permitted or prey invited them.

Impressed with this idea, the *Investigator* tacked, to work up for the road, and on the pennant and ensign being hoisted, each of the ships hung out a small white flag. Lieutenant Flinders was now sent in an armed whale-boat to learn who they were, while the ship came to an anchor, with a spring on the cable, and all hands at quarters. Every motion in the whale-boat, and in the vessel alongside which she was lying, was closely watched, but all seemed to pass quietly until the boat returned. Lieutenant Flinders informed his captain that they were prows from Macassar, and the six Malay commanders came on board shortly afterwards in a canoe. Fortunately the cook on board the *Investigator*

was a Malay, and thus in a short time communications were established.

The chief of the prows was a short elderly man, named Pobasso. He said that there were sixty canoes upon the coast, in different divisions, and that Salloo was the commander-in-chief. These people (I now quote from Flinders) were Mahometans, and they expressed great horror, on looking into the launch, to see pigs there. Yet they had no objection to Port wine, and even requested a bottle to take with them at sunset.

The object of their expedition was a certain marine animal, named trepang, bêche-de-la-mer, sea cucumber, or *Holuthurius cucumis*, which had been seen first by the explorer upon the coral reefs, and afterwards had been dragged up in great quantities by the *seine* net in Caledon Bay. The Malays get the trepang by diving for it in three to eight fathoms; and where it is abundant, a man will bring up eight or ten at a time. They then preserve them by splitting them and drying them in the sun, stretched on pieces of bamboo, after being boiled and pressed between stones. A thousand trepang make a picol, and one hundred picols is a cargo for a prow. It is carried to Timor, and sold to the Chinese, who meet them there; and when all the fleet is assembled they return to Macassar.*

Pobasso was very communicative. He said he had made six or seven voyages from Macassar to this coast within the preceding twenty years, and he was one of the first who came: neither had he seen any ship there before. This latter statement is very important, because it takes away the only chance of ascribing to Malay

* The *Holuthuria* belong to the family of *Echinodermata*, of which the sea-egg upon our coast is a familiar example. The body is free, naked, soft, and thick, with anything but an eatable appearance. What makes them still more repulsive and disgusting is, that the skin wrinkles about like that of a leech, and is generally covered with papillary excrescences or warts of different colours. The head is surrounded with tentacles. They are indolent animals, but when handled the body contracts, and the tentacles are immediately concealed. They usually lie exposed in the shallow waters, or buried in coral sand, their feathery tentacles being alone exposed. What they live upon is a mystery, as their intestines generally contain only pellets of coral rock, which is not very nourishing to an animal which does not secrete a shell.

origin the curious paintings found in the caves on the north coast. Of course, Pobasso could not speak for the whole Malay nation; but it was very possible, from the relics found being all of recent origin, and from the fact of the numerous quantities of trepang still to be found upon the shores, that the fishery could not have been going on very long. And yet Australia must have been well known to the Malays, or else why should they come there to look for the trepang. Flinders is right in observing that it will yet become a problem, how much the peculiar habits of the Northern Australians have been modified by these Mahometans. Certainly the rite of circumcision looks like an intercourse with them; but my own impression is, that this custom dates back to the mysterious darkness of the very origin of the Australian nation.

The place where the explorers met these singular fishermen was called the Malay Road. It lies amid a group of islands, called the English Company's Islands. Arnhem's Bay was found a little further on, and then a third chain of islands, named Wesel's Islands, ran north and north-eastward from the coast. All these islands were moderately high, woody land, sloping down to the water on their west side, but on the east presenting steep cliffs of close-grained sandstone.

On the 5th of March, when off a point on Wesel's Islands, Flinders determined to leave the coast, and return to have his vessel repaired. The south-east monsoon had commenced, and it was evident that the rotten ship could not be kept afloat much longer. But this was not the only consideration: the health of the crew was in an alarming state. A great many were so incapacitated by scurvy that he could not even propose to return to Sydney without fresh provision. Under these circumstances, and with the greatest regret, he turned his ship's head away from the coast. Desolate sand, as its shores were, they were peculiarly dear to him; and it was not without a very bitter pang that he saw the little cliffy islands dropping one by one under the distant horizon as he reluctantly sailed for Timor.

At the island, provisions in abundance were obtained,

and there seemed every chance that they could very easily make the long voyage to Port Jackson round by the west coast. But the fresh provisions did not last long, and when they ceased, dysentery made its appearance among the crew. All haste was made round the west coast. Only one stoppage was allowed, at Goose Island, where some birds were expected to be caught; but none were found, and this delay, small as it was, cost the lives of many of the crew. All were sickly, or utterly stricken down, before they reached the harbour, which was on the 9th June, 1803, after an absence of nearly twelve months. Flinders had at least the satisfaction of knowing that he had returned with as much of the mystery of the coast revealed as it had ever fallen to the lot of one man to accomplish.

But he himself was far from being satisfied with the result. He wished to have accomplished much more. As soon as he returned, he requested the governor of the colony to give him another ship to complete his explorations. He would not have asked so much had the *Investigator* been fit for any sort of repair; but no sooner had she arrived than she was condemned as utterly unseaworthy. The governor had, however, no ship to give. There was nothing for it, therefore, but to go to England, and try to obtain another vessel from the Admiralty. Leaving the scientific portion of his crew behind, he left Port Jackson on the 12th July, on board the *Porpoise*, and five days after, when in lat. 22° 11′, long. about 155°, was shipwrecked upon a reef. There were two other vessels in company at the time, the *Cato* and the *Bridgewater*. The former became a wreck also on the same bank, while the latter escaped by a mere chance. The *Porpoise* kept together well, and the crew were enabled, besides saving themselves, to save their boats, stores, and water. The *Cato* went to pieces immediately, and two of the boys were drowned. The *Bridgewater* was as yet quite safe, and in the morning was seen close at hand by the shipwrecked crew. After tacking to and fro, and keeping the sailors in an agony of suspense, the captain, to his eternal shame, proceeded on his

voyage, without even sending a boat to learn the fate of his companions. It, however, profited him but little. He arrived in India, whence he sailed for Europe, and neither he nor his ship was ever heard of afterwards.

Meanwhile, the shipwrecked crew were all rescued. Flinders, as usual, was a man fit for the occasion. He soon equipped the *Porpoise's* long boat, and steered for Port Jackson in her. He reached Sydney in safety, after much suffering. His information at once procured him assistance from the governor; and, with two small ships, he proceeded to the reef and brought off all his companions.

One of the two ships was a colonial schooner of only twenty-nine tons; in fact, but very little larger than a small river boat. In this he resolved to proceed to England. The enterprise was rather too much for so small a ship, and she had not got beyond the Mauritius when she sadly wanted repairs. Relying upon his passport as an explorer, he landed on the island. It was a sad day for him when he did so. He was immediately taken prisoner, and treated as an impostor. At first, his story was not credited at all, but when his papers showed the truth of his statement, he was accused of being a spy. This accusation was easily refuted, but he was still detained. For six years he remained a prisoner upon the island. We can guess why. At that very time the Emperor Napoleon was obliging Admiral Baudin to usurp the glory of his discoveries. At last, the day of delivery came. Poor Flinders set about editing his journals and preparing the result of his researches for the press. His name had been forgotten during his long imprisonment, but he relied upon these papers to restore all his obscured renown. He was destined never to see it. The very day on which his work was published he died.

There is no single explorer to which Australia owes so much as to Flinders, and none who was allowed to work so completely unrewarded. A monument has been erected to his memory in Port Lincoln, but his name is his only reward. To show how little his deeds benefited his surviving relatives, it is only a very short time ago that a niece of his applied for an assisted

passage, as an emigrant, to the colony of New South Wales. Nothing can be done to reward him now except in perpetuating his name. Let us, at least, give him that reward. Australia never had an explorer like him, either in the accuracy of his surveys, or the boldness and untiring energy of his undertakings. It is one of the most indelible stains upon the reign of Napoleon that such a man was arrested, employed as he was, at the risk of life and health, in researches which were to benefit all mankind. But to detain him, and try to filch from him his hard-earned renown, was beyond all description mean and despicable. How contemptible do the paltry excuses in the *Moniteur*, for his detention, now appear. But it is too late for regrets and indignation. The most generous, most learned, and yet most modest Australian explorer, fell a victim to his misfortunes, and died, there is every reason to believe, broken-hearted.*

In the meantime, while Flinders was pursuing his explorations, a settlement was made at Port Phillip, in 1803, and the preceding August another settlement was established at Risdon, on the east bank of the Derwent, in Tasmania. The Port Phillip settlement did not succeed. The site was thought to be unhealthy, and water was difficult to obtain. Nothing of any importance connected with exploration occurred during its short existence. A boat excursion was made by Lieut. Tuckey, but no new information was gained by it. By the end of June, 1804, the whole settlement was removed to the present site of Hobart Town. At the same time, a northern settlement was formed by Colonel Patterson, on the north coast, near the west arm of the Tamar River. This was called York Town, Port Dalrymple. It was not, however, until three years after that a communication was established overland between the two places.

It should be remarked, that the settlement at Port Phillip had been sent out direct from England, and was

* What a fatality seems to pursue these explorers. The monument to the memory of Flinders, at Port Lincoln, was erected by Sir John Franklin, when he was Governor of Tasmania.

entirely composed of convicts. It was, in fact, just like the settlement of Port Jackson, in 1788. Britain seemed to have recognised it as a principle, that as soon as pickpockets and political offenders had reached a certain number in the gaols, they were to be sent off to any convenient part of the unknown coast, there to flourish or die, as they might feel inclined. While the establishment remained at Port Phillip, several convicts escaped. Very little trouble was taken about them, because the authorities saw very clearly, that if they found it difficult to live in a place where was plenty of provisions, they would find it much harder to make the experiment where there was none. And so the majority of them did; all, in fact, but one. This was a man of gigantic stature, named Buckley, who escaped with two companions. They wandered about pretty contented at first, but their sufferings soon commenced. Food and water were neither of them procurable. After great privations, Buckley separated from his companions, to return to the settlement. He saw them no more, and when he got back the station was deserted. Completely broken in spirit, and wishing only for death to relieve his torture, he wandered about for months. Having found the grave of a native, with the swords and spears of the deceased placed above, according to their custom, he took some of them for his own defence, and shortly after he met with a tribe of natives.

The weapons saved his life. The savages recognised them at once, and imagined that poor Buckley was the deceased come to life again. They therefore adopted him into the tribe. For thirty-three years he remained amongst them. Little by little he lost every trace of civilization, and finally forgot his own language. Once only had he seen white faces during all this long period. While he was upon the beach one day, a ship anchored close alongside. Buckley came down to the shore, with every desire to communicate. A boat put off, and a party came ashore to bury the body of a seaman. Poor Buckley made every effort to make himself known, but all in vain. The boat's crew took him simply for a friendly native, and disregarding his imploring looks,

left him among the savages. He was recovered from the natives in 1836, when Port Phillip was colonized. He died from an accident, in 1857. An account of his life with the natives has been published, but it affords very little information concerning their habits.

It yet remains to describe the further progress of Baudin's expedition, one vessel of which was met by Flinders in Encounter Bay. There is not much discovery to be attributed to them. They proceeded along a great deal of coast previously unknown, on the north and west sides of Australia, but their zeal for exploration was not by any means proportionate to the means at their disposal. They kept so far from the coast on the north side of the continent that only a very small portion of it could be laid down upon their chart, and even this small portion was not correct, because numerous islands were described as part of the mainland.

They came much nearer to the north-west coast, but this was unfortunately one of the most barren parts, and one which had been previously seen by Tasman and Dampier. They had only therefore the poor satisfaction of describing a low coast of merely a succession of sand-hills. They named all the leading features from Cape Leveque to the North-West Cape, which large tract is so monotonously uniform, that it need not be further particularized.

They also found a new opening into Sharks' Bay, which was called the Géographe Channel, and it was in this bay that they found the records of the visits of Dirk Hartog in 1618, and Vlamingh in 1696. The passage into the bay, between Dirk Hartog's and Dorré Island, was named the Naturaliste Channel. Gantheaume Bay was found further to the south, but the opening of the Murchison River was not noticed.

After proceeding along a coast already described by the Dutch, they reached that portion which lies to the south of Swan River. They there discovered a large inlet, lying parallel to the coast; this was named Port Leschenault. From this the shore trended round to the westward, so as to form a large bay, and make an important addition to the features of the west coast. It

was called Géographe Bay, and the extreme westerly part, Cape Naturaliste. From this point the coast trended, in a very unbroken line, to the southward, affording no shelter whatever to ships, and exposing a high, unbroken, rocky face, to the lashings of the western sea. The interior was elevated, apparently densely wooded, but with not much grass. The only remarkable projections upon it were Capes Clairault and Frecynet, until the last point of the survey was reached—Cape Hamelin, which lies north-west of Cape Leeuwin.

This part of the coast had also been surveyed by the Dutch, though but little of their discoveries were known to the world. The French surveys were, however, not much more useful, because as they kept too far from the coast to make detailed observations, the charts could hardly be relied upon. M. Peron, who wrote the account of the voyage, frequently deplores the want of zeal in their commander; and though the weather on the north coast was rather foggy, and somewhat dangerous, there can be no doubt that he let a glorious opportunity for discovery slip through his hands: But it must be said that the fault entirely lay with the commander, for the crew were zealous and anxious to do more. French marine surveys in Australia had been hitherto very accurate, and therefore the neglect of this occasion is all the more to be deplored. In the surveys of Admiral D'Entrecasteaux we have a specimen of what might have been done with a better man than Admiral Baudin.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE BLUE MOUNTAINS CROSSED.

Barreiller and Caley fail in their attempts to cross the Blue Mountains—Description of them—Mitchell—Darwin—Blaxland, Lawson, and Wentworth, at length cross—Evans discovers Bathurst—Campbell River—The Macquarrie River—Governor Macquarrie's journey—Evans discovers the Lachlan.

FOR some years after the time of Flinders, the colonists of New South Wales felt very little interest in the subject of exploration. The coast near them was pretty well known, and this was all they cared about, because the interior was deemed inaccessible. The Blue Mountains reared their sandstone escarpments close to Sydney, and, with dark chasms and gloomy ravines, defied all passage further. It was only after many failures, that all attempts to explore them were abandoned. That of Bass has been already mentioned. Another was made shortly afterwards (in 1802), by Lieutenant Barreiller, but he soon returned as others had done, completely baffled. A year or two afterwards, a Mr. Caley tried again, and though he proceeded much further than any before him, yet he failed at last, and, like his predecessors, was obliged to return.

It may seem singular that any such difficulty should exist, or why, in the whole extent of a mountain range, some means of climbing it could not be found; but the fact of their inaccessibility is so certain, that the wonder is how any person could have penetrated into them at all. Readers will see this very clearly, as further explorations are described; in the meantime description of these ranges will be given. It is by one who knew them well, for he had surveyed their fastnesses on many different occasions; he was surveyor-general of the colony, and, as an explorer, takes one of

the leading places in this history. This was Sir Thomas Mitchell, and he thus describes a journey he made into some of the gorges of the Blue Mountains.

"We now entered the county of Cook, so named because the lofty summits of its ranges must have been the first land which met the eye of the celebrated navigator, on his first approach to the eastern coast. Here again we meet with that precipitous inaccessible kind of country which distinguished the sandstone formation which is so extensive in Australia. This for a long time confined the colonists of New South Wales within the line of the Hawkesbury, until the want of fresh pastures compelled them to explore these rocky ranges. One party succeeded in the attempt to penetrate to the country westward of the ranges, by following the continuous line of high land which separates the valley of the river from the valley of the River Grose. This was the direction of the road. The ravines on each side did not admit of much deviation from the line, although it had been much improved, expecially in the ascent to the mountains above, and in the descent on the other side. The upper region once gained presents considerable uniformity of feature, at least along the connecting ridge, the rise being gradual from a height of about 1000 feet above Emu Plains, to 3400 feet at its maximum, near King's Table Land, twenty-five miles further westward. This mass of sandstone is seamed by ravines, deep in proportion to the height, which increased to the above extent as we proceeded westward, until the profound depth of the valleys adjacent to the Weatherboard Inn, and Blackheath, enclosed by rocky precipices, imparts a wild grandeur to the scenery of a very uncommon character. The whole mass consists of a ferruginous sandstone, composed of angular or slightly worn grains of quartz, cemented by oxide of iron. There is scarcely a particle of land along the whole line of road, which is fit for cultivation. One solitary spot rather better than the rest, has been wisely appropriated for an inn—an establishment very conveniently placed for travellers, as it is about half-way across these mountains. The height above the sea at this inn is about 2800 feet,

and the clouds and temperature give it the climate of England.

"It is a remarkable fact, that the mouths of these stupendous ravines are extremely narrow; some idea also may be formed of their intricate character from the difficulty experienced by the surveyors in endeavouring to obtain access to Mount Hay. Mr. Dixon, in an unsuccessful attempt, penetrated to the valley of the Grose, until then unexplored, and when he at length emerged from the ravines in which he had been bewildered four days, without even reaching Mount Hay, he thanked God (to use his own expression, in an official letter) that he had found his way out of them.

"Mr. Govett was afterwards employed to make a detailed survey of the various ramifications, by mapping each in succession from the general line of road. Then at length, by a patient survey of the whole, he ascertained the ridge connected with Mount Hay, and was the first to ascend it. The view from that summit is very extensive, and the scenery immediately around it very wild, consisting of stupendous perpendicular cliffs, at the foot of which the silvery hue of the Grose, at a depth of 3000 feet, meanders through a green valley, into which neither the colonists nor their cattle have yet (1839), penetrated.

"Having looked into this valley from the summit of Tomah, in 1827, I was tempted soon after to endeavour to explore it by ascending the river, from its junction with the Hawkesbury, near Richmond; but I had not proceeded far in this attempt, accompanied by Major Lockyer and Mr. Dixon, when we were compelled to leave our horses, and soon after to scramble on hands and feet until at length even our quadrumanous progress was arrested by pebbles in the bed of the river, which were as large as houses, and round, over, or between which we found it impossible to proceed." *

These valleys are also spoken of by Mr. Darwin, in his "Naturalist's Voyage." This description is so much more graphic, and gives one so much better an idea of

* Mitchell's Narrative.

the nature of these glens, that I am tempted to add a few paragraphs.

"About a mile and a half," he says, "from the little inn, called the Weatherboard, the country is elevated 2800 feet above the sea. Following down a little valley and its tiny rill of water, an immense gulf unexpectedly opens through the trees, which border the pathway at the depth of perhaps 1500 feet. Walking on a few yards, one stands at the brink of a vast precipice, and below one sees a grand bay or gulf, for I know not what other name to give to it, thickly covered with forest. The point of view is situate as if at the head of a bay, the line of cliff diverging on each side, and showing headland behind headland, as on a low sea-coast.

"These cliffs are composed of horizontal strata, of whitish sandstone, and are so absolutely vertical that in many places a person, standing on the edge and throwing down a stone, can see it strike the trees in the abyss below. So unbroken is the line of cliff, that in order to reach the foot of the waterfall formed by this little stream, it is said to be necessary to go sixteen miles round. About five miles distant in front, another line of cliff extends, which then appears completely to encircle the valley, hence the name of bay is justified as applied to this grand amphitheatrical depression. If we imagine a winding harbour, with its deep water, surrounded by bold cliff-like shores, to be laid dry, and a forest to spring up upon its sandy bottom, we should then have the appearance and structure here exhibited. This kind of view was to me quite novel and extremely magnificent.

"In the evening we reached Blackheath. The sandstone plateau has here reached the height of 3400 feet, and is covered as before with the same scrubby woods. From the road there were occasional glimpses into a profound valley of the same character as the one described, but from the steepness and depth of its sides, the bottom was scarcely ever to be seen.

"Very early next morning I walked about three miles to see Govett's Leap—a view of a similar character with that near the Weatherboard, but, perhaps, even more

stupendous. So early in the day the gulf was filled with a thin blue haze, which, although destroying the general effect of the view, added to the apparent depths at which the forest was stretched out beneath our feet. These valleys, which so long presented an insuperable barrier to the attempts of the most enterprizing of the colonists to reach the interior, are most remarkable. Great armlike bays expand at the upper ends of their branches from the main valleys, and penetrate the sandstone platform. On the other hand, the sandstone often sends promontories into the valleys, and even leaves in them great, almost, insulated masses. To descend into some of these valleys it is necessary to go round twenty miles, and into others the surveyors have only lately penetrated, and the colonists have not yet been able to drive in their cattle. But the most remarkable feature in their structure is, that although several miles wide at their head, they generally contract to such a degree towards their mouths as to become impassable. The surveyor-general, Sir T. Mitchell, endeavoured in vain, first walking, and then by crawling between the great fragments of sandstone, to ascend through the gorge by which the River Grose joins the Nepean, yet the valley of the Grose, in its upper part, as I saw, forms a magnificent level basin some miles in width, and is on all sides surrounded by cliffs, the summits of which are believed to be nowhere less than 3000 feet above the level of the sea.

"When cattle are driven into the valley of the Wolgan (by a path which I descended, partly natural, and partly made by the owner of the land), they cannot escape, for this valley is in every part surrounded by perpendicular cliffs, and eight miles lower down it contracts from an average width of half-a-mile to a mere chasm, impassable to man or beast. Sir Thomas Mitchell states that the great valley of the Cox River, with all its branches, contracts, when it unites with the Nepean into a gorge 2200 yards in width, and about 1000 feet in depth. Other similar cases might be added." *

These were then the difficulties which stopped the

* Darwin, *op. cit.*

colonists of New South Wales. It was not as if they could see the uplifted precipices before them, without a break in their escarpments, or an opening between. On the contrary, the hills seemed gentle wooded slopes; and if occasionally a yellow cliff peeped out in the distance, it did not seem high or inaccessible. But when the explorers got out a little distance into the bush, then it was that they understood the fearful nature of the task they had undertaken. Sometimes they staggered along a narrow spur with precipices on either side, and were finally stopped by a wall of rock; or they crept into the gorges just described, and when the valley opened up, and they thought that their victory was won, a circlet of perpendicular cliffs made them retrace their steps in despair.

But it was not destined to be always so. Amid these gullies and glens, cliffs and ravines, there was a key to the whole position—a path to the summit which was yet to be found. So many failures had been made, that the colonists were tired of the subject until the year 1813 roused them from their apathy. That year proved extremely dry in New South Wales. The grass was nearly all destroyed, and the water failed. The little space hemmed in between the sea and the mountains had lately become too small for the whole colony in any season, and now the flocks and herds died in great numbers. Little grass at any time, none at all now, made them anxious to make any effort rather than see their property destroyed. Three gentlemen, Lieutenant Lawson, and Messrs. Wentworth and Blaxland, determined to attempt a passage across the mountains, in the hope of finding some further extent of pasturage in such a trying season.

The first part of their journey did not promise well. They crossed the Nepean River at Emu Plains, and after ascending the first range of mountains, were entangled among its deep ravines. This lasted a considerable time, and they began to despair, thinking that they should have to return with the sad intelligence which so many engaged on the same errand had brought back to the colony. At length, they found a

spur from the dividing range along the ridge of which they travelled. It led them westward. There was a small stream on each side, almost hidden by the thick forest which lined the ravine, and which became more indistinct as they ascended higher and higher. After suffering many hardships in toiling through the scrub, over the irregular rocks of the ridge, they reached the summit.

To succeed, where so many had failed, was sufficient reward for all their toils; but was theirs a success? They were upon the top of the ridge, it was true, and gazed down into a valley of beautiful richness before them. It was well grassed, and, what was better, well watered; but the sight of this water brought a dismal apprehension to their minds of more difficulties yet before them. The stream was to the eastward, so they were not as yet across the watershed. That had still to be passed, and, for all they knew, might be even more difficult than what they had already seen.

They descended into the valley down the slopes of Mount York, and then proceeded in a westerly direction. The country improved as they went on, and their apprehensions about the dividing range seemed groundless. Eight or ten miles further told them plainly that the worst difficulties were now passed, and as their provisions were expended, they returned to Sydney, after an absence of little more than a month.

The report of their discoveries was a perfect God-send to the colonists. Things could not have been in a worse state. All the population which could be supported round Sydney was hitherto very small, and as even those found it difficult to live, it was a serious question what would become of the country if new pastures were not discovered. Of course, immediate steps were taken to make use of these discoveries.

Mr. Evans, the deputy surveyor-general, was directed by Governor Macquarrie to proceed with a party and follow up the discoveries already made. He crossed the Nepean River on the 20th November, 1813, and on the 26th arrived at the termination of Messrs. Lawson and Wentworth's journey. Proceeding westward, he

crossed a mountainous broken country—the grass of which was good, and the valleys well watered—until the 30th, when they had crossed the dividing range between the eastern and western waters. This was known, because they reached a stream which flowed to the westward, down a gentle slope of a well-grassed valley. It was called the Fish River. Evans traced it until the 7th, though a very fine country, so different from the eastern side of the range, that it seemed like a new world. The soil was rich and deep, not broken by rocks, or covered with sand, but black and grassy, and scarcely stony at all.

The Fish River soon fell into another from the southward, which was large, and evidently carrying down a great body of water at times. It was called the Macquarrie, instead of the native name of Wambool. It carried running water in a gravelly slender stream, but high above it were lofty banks, wide apart, and beautifully verdant. Mr. Evans continued to follow the river until the 18th December, passing over rich tracts, whose only drawback seemed to be the absence of timber, and of building stone. The wide level plains abounded with even kangaroo and other game; the river was also plentifully stocked with fish, but with all this plenty they saw only six natives during the whole time of their absence, though signal fires were pretty numerous. On the 8th January, 1814, Mr. Evans returned with his party to Emu Plains, having been 100 miles in a direct line due west from the Nepean River.

This ultra-mountain region was, as before observed, like a new creation. The grass and timber of the plains were the same, but better than those found on the east sides; the birds were also similar, but here the resemblance ceased. The scenery was quite of a different character: the soil was dark and rich, and the fish in the rivers were altogether of a different species from any hitherto met with. But where did these rivers flow to? That was a question which at once perplexed the colonists. They flowed westward; and to suppose that they traversed the immense distance between that and the west coast was out of the question. This was

a problem which was not decided for very many years afterwards, and for its solution the most of the expeditions which succeeded were undertaken.

From the report of Mr. Evans, everyone was anxious to make use of the new tract of country as soon as possible. In fact, every day added to the distress of the cattle, and the sooner they commenced taking them over the range the better. It was the opinion of the surveyor that a road could easily be made along the ridge, and this was ordered to be commenced immediately, for it need hardly be said, that without a road the interior would remain as effectually closed as if a passage had never been discovered. In January, 1815, the road was finished, as far as what is now the town of Bathurst, and in April of the same year Governor Macquarrie went to inspect the places discovered upon the new line. This journey was in some sort an exploration of the country already passed through; and, then for the first time, were names given to various remarkable places on the route. Thus as he proceeded up the ridge, there was a remarkable pile of stones in a ravine at the foot of an inaccessible cliff. This was the cairn built by Mr. Caley, who had reached thus far after incredible labours. Here he had paused, disheartened, looking up to the long vista of crag over crag which was still before him. He built a cairn to mark the spot. It was named Caley's Repulse.

The summit of the mountain terminates in abrupt precipices on the south-western sides, while, further on, it blends with the ragged summit of distant hills, covered with dark forest, or verdant with grass. It was named King's Table Land. Below this was the valley, reaching by an abrupt slope to the watershed; this was named Prince Regent's Glen. Proceeding hence, to the thirty-third mile, on the top of a hill, an opening presents itself on the south side of the west of the glen, from whence a view is obtained that is particularly beautiful and grand. This was one of the usual rock basins, which have already been described, with circular walls of cliff all round, and was named Pitt's Amphitheatre. The road continues from hence for the space of

seventeen miles on the ridge of the mountain which forms one side of the Regent's Glen, and there it suddenly terminates in nearly a perpendicular of 676 feet high. As this road was constructed by Mr. Cox, it was called in consequence Cox's Pass. Although that pass was the only particular point then discovered, for descending by, it was, unfortunately, the most inconvenient. It was higher than the mountains at either side, and thus the road to the crest of the hill could be seen ascending over the highest ground.

The valley at the base of Mount York was named the Vale of Clwyd (now the site of Hartley), in consequence of the strong resemblance it bore to the vale of that name in North Wales—at least, so the governor thought when he bestowed the name; but if anything Australian could have resembled a true British landscape, no matter how rocky and wild, the foliage and verdure must have altered very much from what it now is. The valley was found to be watered by two pure rivulets, which united into a river at the western extremity. This stream was called Cox's River. It belongs to the eastern side of the range, and empties itself into the River Nepean. Three beautiful hills to the westward were named after the three first explorers who discovered this pass. A range of very lofty hills and narrow valleys alternately form the track from Cox's River for a distance of sixteen miles, until the Fish River is arrived at on the eastern declivity of the range. To this range the governor gave the name of Clarence's Hilly Range. Proceeding from the Fish River, and a short distance from it, a very singular and beautiful mountain attracts the attention; its summit being crowned with a large extraordinary looking rock, nearly circular in form, which gives the whole very much the appearance of a hill fort in India. To this lofty hill Mr. Evans, who was the first European discoverer, gave the name of Mount Evans. Passing on from hence the country continues hilly, but affords good pasturage, gradually improving to Sidmouth Valley, which is eight miles distant from the pass of the Fish River. They were now at the commencement of the

plains. The forest disappeared as if by magic, and in place of the rugged climbing, the country became level. Sidmouth Valley was a beautiful little hollow, running north-west and south-east, between hills of easy ascent, thinly covered with timber. Thirteen miles distant from this vale is Campbell River, which now embracing nothing but the grassy plains, swelling and undulating all round, disappeared into the far distance. The river has high banks and a broad bed, and in its reaches and pools immense numbers of the platypus are found. The soil on both banks is rich, and the grass luxuriant.

Two miles below where the road crosses this stream, there is a rich tract of low land, which has been named Mitchell's Plains. Here, with O'Connell Plains and Macquarrie Plains, were patches of good open ground, which lay around the junction of the Fish and Campbell Rivers. Beyond this lay the Bathurst Plains, first commencing where the Macquarrie was joined by the Campbell River.

The governor reached Bathurst on the 4th May, and was at first occupied in giving directions for the founding of the new town on the left bank of the stream. During the week he was also occupied in making excursions on various sides of the plains. One of these extended nearly twenty-three miles in a south-west direction. None of his journeys, however, went beyond the limits of the plains, and his discoveries resulted in nothing further than ground a little more elevated than usual, or patches of forest trees. But he was very desirous that more should be known of the country south-west, because in that direction it seemed most likely that the Macquarrie would be found to turn.

Accordingly, he despatched Mr. Evans with a small party, and one month's provisions, to explore towards the bearing just mentioned. The first part of this journey was along a valley, down which a small stream poured into the Macquarrie. This was called Queen Charlotte's Valley. Upon reaching the top of the valley, stony ridges succeeded amid a scrubby country, until two mountains were found, with a considerable stream

flowing to the north-west. This was evidently a tributary of the Macquarrie, as well as another, named Limestone Creek, which was found further on. The latter was situate in good country.

Two days' journey to the west of this last stream brought them upon a fine river, named the Lachlan, not a pretty name certainly, but that, unfortunately, was the Christian name of the governor. This river differed very much from the Macquarrie. It was neither so wide nor so important a stream, but its banks showed that it sometimes carried down a considerable body of water. Its course, too, was not so northerly, and the whole appearance of the stream was against the supposition that it was a tributary of the Macquarrie. But where did it run to? Where, in fact, did either of them go, was a puzzling question which Mr. Evans was anxious to solve. And he thought to do so, for he journeyed with that view down to the Lachlan, without, however, ascertaining more than that it had a very winding course. When he resolved to turn back, he had found that the flats on both sides of the river were extensive and good, and the stream about forty yards broad. There was no hill or eminence near, from which a view could be obtained. And then this first exploring party returned with the river problem more perplexed and embarrassing than ever. There was not one, but two rivers flowing into the interior, within a short distance of each other. They were both flowing, and every mile diverged more and more from each other. Where did they stop? This was the simple question—where?—which took so long to answer.

CHAPTER IX.

OXLEY'S EXPLORATIONS.

The course of the Lachlan—Mount Amyot—Level Plains—Mount Cunningham—The country flooded—Exploration of the south-west—Peel's Range—Gloomy predictions of Oxley—Regains the Lachlan, and again proceeds down it—Is again stopped by marshes—Tries to reach the Macquarrie—Campbell's Lake—Emmeline's Valley—Harvey's Range—Mary's Valley—Bell's River—The Macquarrie—Wellington Valley.

THE discoveries of Mr. Evans had only served to increase the curiosity of the colonists. Every one was anxious to know the sequel of the two rivers. The spirit of exploration was now fairly evoked, and though as much had been done in this way lately as the young settlement could conveniently afford, no one was desirous that a pause should be made. Unfortunately, this kind of enthusiasm has played the principal part in the exploration of Australia. Readers will see, as the history progresses, that the subject has always been taken up in fits and starts. A period of wild excitement and ill-matured schemes is generally succeeded by years of complete indifference, and this is why it has taken so very long to lift the veil of mystery from the geographical problems of the continent. Thus it will be seen that Oxley's experience of the rivers of the interior led to a strong reaction, and nothing was done further until 1830. At this period, Sturt's success led to a burst of enthusiasm, which only died out with Mitchell's journey in 1835. Then another, though shorter, period of listlessness ensued, until Sturt was sent to explore the centre of the continent. The subject then seemed to vivify wonderfully. Sturt, Mitchell, Leichhardt, and Kennedy, followed in rapid succession. But the zeal was a fire of straw. Kennedy's melancholy death, and

Leichhardt's loss, took the remaining energy out of the expiring ardour of public spirit, and the matter became quite extinguished for nearly ten years. Then, all of a sudden, it lit up again. The results are in the memory of all, and will be set down later in these volumes. Burke and Wills, and Stuart, Gregory, Landsborough, and M'Kinlay were out at nearly the same time, but one would look in vain through the colonial papers to see the subject even mentioned at the present day.

Now, these desultory efforts are to be regretted, because they, in reality, do less in the long run than a quiet well-sustained energy, which should avoid the extremes of listlessness and enthusiasm. If it be too much to expect this, knowing the constitution of human nature, at least some provision might be made against the reaction, and whatever funds the colonists might subscribe for the purpose in their zeal, a constant grant might be made every year by the Colonial Legislature, so that the subject might not be entirely forgotten.

When Mr. Evans returned, the governor wanted no persuasion to send a party to follow up his discoveries. The surveyor-general of the colony at that time was Lieutenant Oxley, R.N., an enterprising officer, who was as anxious as anyone for the further exploration of the interior. To him the offer was made of the command of a party to explore the Lachlan. Why that river was chosen in preference to the Macquarrie, it is difficult now to discover. The latter was by far the most important river, and might be the means of opening up extensive tracts of valuable country, whereas the Lachlan was surrounded by barren soil and useless land. But it was determined to explore the worst river first. So let us suppose that the colonists were anxious to know the worst at once. Oxley readily took charge of the party which was sent on with the stores, &c., to encamp upon Byrne's Creek, which was Evans's furthest point. The stores were sufficient to last five months, and besides other arrangements, two boats were provided sufficient to carry the whole of their equipment, excepting the horses.

On the 1st May the party started from Byrne's Creek, surveying and mapping the country as they advanced, while the boats were leisurely worked down the stream. The first five days were extremely uninteresting. The river was followed through a poor, level, and mountainous country, unprovided with any eminence from which a view could be obtained. There was no water anywhere, except in the river, which was an unfailing source of food in the shape of fish to the party. Though level and poor, the country was not barren. At times they had great difficulty in struggling through the grass which was breast high, and where there was no grass there was scrub. The timber was not good—small gum trees, shea oaks, and acacias, with their usual scanty and gloomy foliage, which gives such a dreary character to the landscape.

On the 5th, a creek was reached. Though small, the banks were steep, and dangerous enough to cause a great delay to the party, for all the horses had to be unloaded in crossing. On riding up the creek, it was found to terminate in extensive plains of very wet loamy clay, upon which grew abundantly a new species of acacia, called by Mr. Allan Cunningham, the botanist, who accompanied the expedition, *Acacia pendula.**

The boats had hitherto managed the navigation of the river pretty well, but on this day their difficulties commenced in earnest. They had to cut their passage through the sunken timber three or four times, and even then the navigation was very dangerous, for the river was rapid, and the channel very narrow. The party were obliged to stop at last on a very barren spot, where there was little or no grass for the horses, and the country beyond it getting worse in that respect, as far as it could be seen.

The distant view did not belie the reality. The

* This acacia, which has much the habit of the weeping willow, is found very extensively on the wet, alluvial flats of the west rivers. It sometimes forms scrubs and thickets, which give a characteristic appearance to the interior of this part of Australia, so that, once seen, it can never be again mistaken for scenery of any other country in the world. The Myall scrubs are nearly all of *Acacia pendula*.

country passed through next morning was very barren, and intercepted by swamps and lagoons. At eight miles, they reached at last (with wonder be it said) a hill, the only elevation they had seen for many days. It was a picturesque little hill, thickly clothed with tall tapering trees, with emerald green spots of rich grass between. It was named Mount Amyot. From its summit a most extensive view was obtained. On the opposite side of the river was another hill (Mount Stuart), and vast plains, clear of timber, lay on the south side of the stream. These plains were named Hamilton's Plains, but as they were bounded in the far distance by hills of considerable elevation, the country thus included was named Princess Charlotte's Crescent. To the west of Amyot the river was bounded by the horizon, which was only broken here and there by distant elevations, which became remarkable only in contrast to the general dead level. It seemed like an ocean of trees for thirty or forty miles, which distance Oxley believed he could see around. Smoke broke the loneliness here and there, showing that natives could subsist in what to this party of explorers seemed a most desolate region. But really it must be mentioned once for all, that Oxley took a very gloomy view of everything connected with the interior, and that when he speaks of desolate country, it should be balanced by observing that a great deal of the land he thus describes, affords a comfortable home to a large number of European settlers at the present day. Three mountains, visible from Mount Amyot, were named respectively Mounts Melville, Cunningham, and Maude.

Mount Cunningham was on the line of the river, and they reached it upon the 11th. The intervening land was, of course, as level as they had seen it to be from Mount Amyot, and did not grow more fertile. Strangely enough, the river was rising at the rate of about a foot every night. There had been no rain at all for the previous ten days, and not very much for the last five weeks. There were not either any extensive creeks joining the main stream, for the party had now followed it for one hundred and fifty miles; and it was only sup-

plied by a few insignificant brooks. The only conclusion was, that the Lachlan was derived direct from the mountains, among which there must have been heavy rains.

The river continued to rise as they advanced, until it was level with its banks, and about eighteen feet deep, although still no rain was falling. The explorers did not see how much they were interested in this singular phenomena until they reached a space, named Field's Plains. Here it was evident that their progress westward was stopped. The stream had overflowed both banks, and its course was lost amid the marshes. It was a dismal prospect from the only eminence they were able to reach. The day was dull, and the sky and atmosphere of a leaden colour; the trees, which collected together in clumps on the interminable plains, were continued over the water which surrounded them, and the whole country, from west to north, was a complete marsh, for a distance of twenty-five or thirty miles. The picture was not a pleasing one at any time; but to men who knew that there was a desert of plain, and a lofty mountain range between them and their fellow-creatures, and who stood now with their horses and baggage on a little eminence, round which the water was rapidly rising, the prospect was dismal indeed.

There was, however, some hope for them: they had left, a short distance back, a south-west branch of the river, which might take them to higher ground. They retraced their steps to it, and again followed down the stream, but only for four miles: at this distance it turned into the marshes, where the other was hidden from them.

What was to be done now? To follow the Lachlan was out of the question; but there might be other rivers which they could not fail to see, if they made for the sea coast in a south-west direction. This was a bold idea, and, had it been carried out, would have immortalized Oxley, and led him through the best part of Australia Felix. He certainly intended to try to reach Cape Northumberland, and thus intersect any river which ran between Cape Otway and Spencer's Gulf.

With this view, it would be necessary to abandon the boats, as well as every superfluous article of baggage. This was easily done—too easily, perhaps, considering how much they had cost—and the party moved away from the Lachlan on the 18th.

In the meantime, Mr. Cunningham had made an excursion towards Mount Melville. The country was as much flooded in that direction as any other. Some slightly elevated tracts were found, but these were very barren, and covered with acacia scrubs. The natives had been recently under Mount Melville, and left around their deserted fire-places abundance of fresh-water mussel shells, as an evidence of the kind of food they lived upon.

Now commenced the journey south-west. The former part had been desolate, because of the manner in which the country was deluged with water. They were now to experience another kind of desolation, but without the water. The country was still level, but studded with grass, only in patches, and by far the greater part producing no grass at all: the trees were principally scrubs of *Acacia pendula* and cypress trees, growing in a soil of light red sand; the land seemed parched, as if rain had not fallen for many months. The first day they did not meet any water, and were obliged to stop in the middle of an acacia scrub, as the horses were too much fatigued to proceed further; but they were still near the influence of the Lachlan, and, therefore, some small lagoons were found after a little search. Several natives' huts were upon the edge of these, but they had not been lately inhabited.

But this good fortune was not of daily occurrence. As they proceeded from day to day they could barely procure sufficient water for their wants. On the 25th, however, the country changed. On that day they reached the base of a hill of considerable magnitude, terminating westward in a precipice nearly three hundred feet high. It was named Mount Ayton. From its summit, an extensive view was obtained. The country was still level plains, while the horizon was bounded by distant ranges, which just broke the outline

of the level enough to show that there were elevations of some kind. Most of the hills near Mount Ayton resembled it, in the fact that they terminated their western faces in precipices. A few names given to the ranges in the neighbourhood must be here inserted, because they bear an important part in the surveys of subsequent explorers.

The considerable range near them, to the west, was named Peel's Range; a small one on the north-west, Goulburn's Range; one close at hand, on the south, Jones's Range; and a lofty hill, seventy miles to the N.N.W., Mount Granard.

They could not leave Mount Ayton as soon as they desired, for it possessed no features of interest, and was singularly barren; but this very circumstance caused the horses to stray. Grass and water to them were of more importance than all the explorations in the world. When their journey was resumed, on the 31st, it was amid terrible difficulties. The first nine miles was excellent travelling, over very indifferent soil; but at the ninth mile they entered a very thick scrub, overrun with creepers and prickly acacia. They continued cutting their way through it until night, and then were obliged to encamp in the middle, without water. Next morning, water was the first consideration. Two miles brought them into more open country, and they proceeded onward towards the end of Peel's Range, hoping that they would find water there; but the horses could not go much further. There was nothing left but to unload them, and separate, in search of a drink, which neither men nor animals had tasted for thirty-six hours.

It would have gone hard with these neophytes in exploration if they had not found some pools at the end of the range, for two of their horses died from the effect of this little privation and their previous fatigue. Young explorers do not easily understand how much their own safety depends upon that of their horses; and very likely Oxley's animals were not economized much at first in the labours put upon them. All that were left were now very much exhausted, but still Oxley held on his course for Cape Northumberland.

The route was barren, rugged, and rocky, though to the south-west it was still a perfect plain, interspersed with those dreadful sands, which made the explorers shudder to look at; but the country soon became impracticable. There was no grass, and the water was so scarce, and of so inferior a quality, that the horses suffered to an extent which made Oxley fear he should lose them all in a few days. But even had these drawbacks been of less importance, they were brought up by another scrub on the 5th June, which they had not the heart to face. Oxley again reluctantly changed the course of the party, but he would not go back: he steered northerly. This was most unfortunate. Some evil genius seemed always to preside over his decisions. He was now only about twenty-three miles from the River Murrumbidgee, and, had he reached that, Mitchell's discoveries would have been anticipated by nearly twenty years; but his object now was to regain the Lachlan. This was a great pity: the Lachlan was the most distant water he could attempt to reach from where he then was.

But his fault seemed to be despondency. He took a gloomy view of everything, and could not imagine that ever human being was in a more sterile desert. This shows how a man's mind is tinctured more by circumstances than facts. It was not the country which was bad, nor was it its appearance alone which made him think it so wretched: it was his dead horses, and the emaciated condition of those which survived—it was the novelty of his position, and the utter solitude of the bush; and, finally, it was the disappointment in finding a fine river terminating in such a dismal manner as the Lachlan had done. Only under such depressing influence can one imagine an explorer writing as follows:—

"Yesterday, being the King's birthday, Mr. Cunningham planted under Mount Brogden (of the Peel's Range) acorn, peach, and apricot stones, and quince seeds, with the hope rather than the expectation that they would grow, and serve to commemorate the day and situation, should these desolate plains be ever again visited by

civilized man, of which, however, I think there is very little probability."*

This is a remarkable prophecy, and should serve as a useful lesson to those who despair of Australia's future, or listen too credulously to the opinions of explorers about the country they pass through.

After an attempt to travel to the north-west, in which both men and horses suffered extremely from want of water, and from the desolate nature of the country, Mr. Oxley was obliged to keep in under Peel's Range, in order to have the benefit of the small swamps which were found at its base. This took them in a northerly direction. Their sufferings during all this time were very great. The horses were becoming every day more and more exhausted, and the men, besides over-exertion and scanty supplies, in the best days, had now to go upon reduced rations. When these inconveniences were at their height, rain came. The prospect of constant supplies of water made them blind at first to the consequences of this new feature. But the unpleasant truth was not long reaching them. The country became very boggy, so much so, indeed, that it wanted but very little more to make it into one vast quagmire. If that happened, the lives of the whole party would be sacrificed.

Monotonous as the view was, it was rendered more so by the slow manner in which they were obliged to traverse it. Each step they took sank down into soft clay, from which it required an exertion to extricate the feet; this sent them staggering forward, step by step, and a mile would scarcely be accomplished before they would sink down exhausted. Floundering along in this wretched manner, it is no wonder that two of the horses soon died. Their animals were now reduced to a number which would not suffice to carry their stock of provisions along. On the 18th of June, Mr. Evans was sent on to search for grass and water, it being intended, if he were successful, to take one-half the provisions to a depôt, and then when the horses

* Oxley's Journal.

were recruited, to send them back for the other half. Fortunately, a good camping ground was found near them.

On the 21st, Oxley again says, that for all purposes of civilized man, the interior of this country, westward of a certain meridian, was utterly uninhabitable, deprived, as it was, of wood, and water, and grass. No doubt, Oxley had good cause for being low-spirited, if ever man had; but it is well to bear his opinion in mind, as a commentary on the opinion of others in similar situations.

From the camping ground they proceeded through a broken, irregular country, for nearly six miles, when the weakness of the horses made it impossible to proceed further. They halted under a rocky hill. From its summit the country appeared to be perfectly level to the north. To the west there was a range named Macquarrie Range, and to the north-west a lofty detached hill, named Mount Flinders. The rain still continued, and to add to their misfortunes, it was now first discovered that three of the casks which had been all along taken for flour casks were filled with pork. Do not laugh, reader. You must live in the bush for some time before you know what a cruel blow it was to these poor men to be thus deprived of flour, to say nothing of the actual loss of food thereby.

On the 23rd, after watering the horses in a most tedious way—that is, out of the camp kettles, because the holes were to small for the horses to drink from—they proceeded northwards. Suddenly, when they least expected it, they saw a stream before them. They hurried forward. It was the River Lachlan, again emancipated from the marshes, and flowing southward, in a narrow channel. Of course, they resolved to follow it. It was evident, from its appearance, that it had received no tributary during its long course of over 200 miles, and therefore, speculation became busy what had become of the Macquarrie, and whether it could have run parallel with the Lachlan for such a distance.

The stream was lined on each side by lightly timbered plains, pleasant to view, and apparently of rich

soil. It is needless to give the various names bestowed on the plains which lined different reaches of the river. They were rich banks, well covered with grass, and looking so fertile, that they made the explorers soon forget the arid nature of the country they had just come through. But their joy was of very short duration. The river was ominously high when they reached it, and lower down the channel, narrowed so much that it was evident another overflow must soon take place. It was not long before their sad forebodings were realized. On the 28th of June, they were no longer able to follow the banks; they were merged in an immense marsh. This was skirted round, and the main stream again reached, flowing rapidly through arid plains; but only for a short distance. On the 3rd of July, they found that it was again merged in another marsh, the ground on every side being difficult to travel over. It was not only boggy, but numerous pitfalls or holes were made by the crayfish all over the plains, so thickly that men and horses sank into them at every step.

Oxley was determined to follow the stream for some distance further, at any rate, even through these plains, which were so difficult to travel over. For two days, therefore, they continued, during which time it was not very easy to recognise the river. At the end of the second day it was seen again, but very much altered in appearance; the banks were not six feet above the water, which was very muddy, and the current, which was scarcely perceptible, was not four feet deep. Both sides were alike. A very large sheet of water or lake lay on the north-west, while to the west the horizon was unbroken, except by the trees which lined the edge of the stream. The view decided Oxley; he could see that the channel continued, by the solemn winding avenue of flooded gum trees,* which stretched out their stately arms over the water, until lost in the far distance.

* This tree is found throughout the whole continent, wherever water lies upon the surface. It is one of the finest of Australian trees, growing in the beds of rivers, so that only its branches can be seen at a distance; and thus streams may be descried afar off by their resemblance to a close procession or a winding funeral train.

But they were growing in a marsh which made him shudder to think of crossing. He would go no further.

This was the turning point in Oxley's survey. Let us hear himself as to his opinions on resigning the main object of his expedition. Before doing so, however, it must first be remarked that many rivers have since been discovered, which empty themselves on to the south coast, between Cape Otway and Cape Northumberland. This turning point also is now surrounded with thriving sheep stations, and not far from it is a rich gold field, the Lachlan diggings. This will show the errors into which explorers are led, who hastily form conclusions on a very imperfect knowledge of the country. And though it is anticipating, it may be mentioned that when next the lower Lachlan was visited, its bed was quite dry, and no water could be found near it.

"From the marks on the trees," says Oxley, "the waters appear to rise about three feet above the level of the bank—a height more than sufficient to inundate the whole country. This stream is certainly dry in the summer season, or in the absence of rain, nothing more than a chain of ponds serving as a channel to convey the waters from the eastward over this low tract. It is certain that no waters join this river from its source to this point, and passing as it does, for the most part, through a line of country so low as to be frequently overflowed to an extent, north and south, perfectly unknown—but certainly at this place exceeding forty miles—it must cause the country to remain for ever uninhabitable and useless for all the purposes of civilized man.

"These considerations, added to the state of our provisions—of which, at the reduced rations of three pounds of flour per man per week, we had but ten weeks' remaining—determined me to proceed no further westward with the main part of the expedition; but as the state of the greater part of our horses was such as absolutely to require some days' rest and refreshment before we attempted to return westward, I considered that it would be acting best up to the spirit of my instructions to proceed forward myself with three men and horses,

and as we should carry nothing with us but our provisions, we should be enabled to proceed with so much expedition, as to go as far and see as much in three days as it would take the whole party at least seven to perform.

"My object in thus proceeding further, was to get so far to the westward as to place beyond all question the impossibility of a river falling into the sea between Cape Otway and Cape Bernoulli. In my opinion, the very nature of the country *altogether precludes such a possibility*, but I think my proceeding so far will be conclusive with those who have most strongly imbibed the conviction that a river enters the sea between the capes in question. I also had entertained this idea, which nothing but a survey of the country without hills or permanent streams could have destroyed. I must observe, as a remarkable feature in this country, that for the last fifty miles we had not seen a stone nor a pebble of any kind, save two, and they were taken out of the gizzards of two emus. I am more firmly pursuaded that there are no eminent grounds in this part of the country until those low sandy hills are reached which bound the south-western coast line. These, in my judgment, are the *only barriers* which prevent the ocean from extending over a country which was probably once under its dominion."

This statement is plain enough, but fortunately very incorrect. We have seen from surveys, which Oxley ought to have known, that there was something more on the south-western coast besides sand-hills; and in spite of the evidence of the lowness of the plains, against which only such weak evidences as emus' gizzards could be adduced, Oxley ought also to have known that the bed of the river was still considerably elevated above the level of the sea. However, the desire to make a final effort to the westward was very creditable to his energy and perseverance, because his prospects were getting more gloomy, one of his horses having died while he was deliberating. He started with three men, and proceeded to follow the course of the stream as well as he could. At three and a half

miles from his tents, a large arm extended from the north bank to a considerable distance on that side. The banks of the river, which now appeared like islands of irregular shape, jutting out from amid the lagoons, were getting lower and lower; at last, they disappeared altogether. There was nothing but marsh visible, with a line of gum trees, through which a slight current was sluggishly flowing. But even the trees were not what they used to be. The large stately forest gums, with massive arms and dense foliage, were replaced by straggling, withered-looking gum shrubs, almost denuded of leaves. They advanced towards these; but exploration in such a place was hopeless. The morass now enclosed them; the water was stagnant, though even then not at its height; for gum trees showed marks from which it was seen that the marsh stood sometimes one foot higher. It appeared also that the water continued stationary at that height for a considerable time, because long moss and other marks of stagnant water lay in great masses among the branches of the numerous acacia trees, and the wiry Polyonums; which abounded.*

This was the end of River Lachlan, as far as Oxley could ascertain. He says that if there had been a hill or an eminence within forty miles of him, he must have seen it; but there was not the least appearance of any such. "It was," he says, "with infinite pain and regret that I was forced to come to the conclusion that the interior of this vast country is a marsh, and uninhabitable. How near these marshes may approach to the south-western coast I know not; but I do not think that the range of high and dry land in that quarter extends back north-easterly for any great distance, it being known that the coast from Cape Bernoulli is sandy and destitute of water."

So much for the interior. The theory which follows is quite as amusing. He says: "I think that the river is the channel by which the waters rising in those ranges of hills to the westward of Port Jackson, known

* This bush is like a tangled thicket of green wire, no leaves; and the branches are an almost uniform thickness.

by the name of the Blue Mountains, and which do not fall into the sea on the east coast, are conveyed to those immense inland marshes, its sinuous course causing it to overflow its banks on a much higher level than the present, and in consequence forming those low wet levels which are in the very neighbourhood of the Government depôt (Byrne's Creek?). Its length of course is, in my opinion, the principal cause of our not finding anything like a stream for the last hundred miles, as the immense body of water which must at times be collected in such a river must find a vent somewhere; but being spent during so long a course without any accession, the only wonder is that even these waters should cause a current at so great a distance from their source. Everything, however, indicates that in dry seasons the channel of the river is empty, or forms only a chain of ponds. It appears to have been a considerable time since the banks were overflowed—certainly not for the last year; and I think it probable that they are not often so, for the quantity of water must indeed be immense, and of long accumulation, in the upper marshes, before the whole of this vast country can be under water."

Amusing as this theory is, it possesses undoubtedly a great deal of truth. In fact, if the idea of the immense permanent marsh be subtracted from it, the whole is a fair statement of the facts of the case.

The furthest point reached was lat. 33° 57′ 30″; long. 144° 31′ 15″. From hence Oxley returned upon his tracks, resolving now to cross the river on the first favourable opportunity, and to proceed in a north-easterly direction in search of the Macquarrie.

For days their journey was through very low swampy land, with few or no trees, and an unbroken horizon. There was only one hill seen, and it received the name of Mount Torrens. The river meanwhile was subject to the most extraordinary fluctuations. Sometimes it seemed scarcely to flow at all; and again it would rise as much as two feet in a single night. Having discovered a lake (Lake Campbell), they endeavoured to cross the stream near it, but they were

not successful. While a bridge was being constructed, Messrs. Oxley and Byrne took a ride into the country to the southward. After going about two miles, they were most agreeably surprised at the sight of a very fine lake, with a hard sandy beach on the north, but a bold shore, with red cliffs, on the south side. It was supplied by a small creek, and a low ridge of bare hills lay between this sheet of water and the one they had formerly discovered. There was a low hill about five miles to the westward, which Oxley ascended; this gave him an extensive prospect. The expanse of water in the lake was too large and winding to be seen in one point of view, but it broke into large sheets from east to west for upwards of six miles; it was bounded six or seven miles from its eastern extremity by a low range of hills connected with Mount Byng; and from the dark, wooded appearance of the country, Oxley thought that its source came from a more northerly quarter.

To the westward was the Goulburn Range, distant five or six miles, its bold rocky peaks of lofty elevation forming a striking contrast to the dead level country to the south, in which Mount Ayton appeared like a speck on the horizon. To the north was Mount Granard, which had been visible from Mount Ayton. To the north-east were extensive flats, in which, in one place, Oxley fancied he could distinguish water. Between the hill and the river, Campbell Lake wound along the plain; but its width did not allow it to be so conspicuously seen as Lake Regent, as the other was called. Altogether it was a fine prospect, whether on the north, with its jutting, abrupt blue mountains, or on the south, where a dark sea of foliage made the silvery lake close by appear like a mirror set in bronze. To the west, eucalyptus and cypress lent a mournful appearance to the marshy flats, whose foreground was the rocky or red loamy shrubby soil of the margin of the lake. In fact, the hills, the lake, and the river made it the only delightful piece of scenery met with since they had left Mount Amyot.

Oxley continued along the banks of the river,

looking in vain for a place where he might cross his party to the other side. Their course meanwhile was through open plains, only interrupted by the very zig-zag course of the stream. Another hill was reached upon the 29th. Such elevations were the only means they had of ascertaining the nature of the country they were passing through, for on the level flats only a very short distance at either side would be seen. Round the foot of Piper's Hill the river wound, trending to the south-east, through low marshy grounds covered with *Acacia pendula*. This was, in fact, the further side of the swamp which had stopped them on the first part of their journey. He had then thought that the Lachlan did not run further, but was lost in swamps caused by the stream dividing into a multitude of branches. He had found it again, however, as we have seen, and then a second time traced it into an immense swamp. There he had left it, believing that it did not run further; but having been mistaken once, it is a great pity that he did not leave room for believing that he might be mistaken again. Had he done so, he certainly would have reached the junction of the Murrumbidgee in trying to round the great marsh.

On the 3rd August, they at last succeeded in crossing the river, and now proceeded to the north-east, intending to keep that course for two or three days to clear them of the low grounds north of the Lachlan, before they travelled more easterly for Bathurst. The above course would also carry them to the northward, far enough to ensure their falling in with the Macquarrie, at a considerable distance from the settlement. Besides these considerations, Oxley imagined that there might be other streams flowing to the westward from the Blue Mountains, which he would thus intersect.

The route lay through a low wet country for the first eight or ten miles, covered with the usual Australian weeping-willow, the *Acacia pendula*. The last three miles were rather more elevated; the soil was in general a loose sandy loam, with small cypress, box, and acacia trees; a few acres, in patches, had been

burned, relieving the eye from the otherwise scrubby appearance of the country. They passed through two or three small eucalyptus scrubs; and in getting out of one about thirteen miles wide, they fortunately hit upon a native well, containing a few gallons of water.

The first four miles of next day's journey led through a scrub different from what they had hitherto seen; it was the mallee scrub of the natives, or *Eucalyptus dumosa*, which, though not so difficult as the euryalean scrub, a passage was not easily forced through it, because it was boggy, and extremely distressing to the horses. After passing through it, the country for five or six miles further was more open, though the soil was still loose and red, and apparently elevated. Water was very scarce; from day to day they could hardly get enough for their own wants, to say nothing of the distress of the horses. The consequence was that they now began to experience the sufferings and difficulties of the boggy land near the Peel Ranges. They found water in these scrubs quite providentially; they were only small holes, but enough to refresh both men and horses, and this was all they cared for. The scrub did not continue open; as they went through it; on the contrary, it got thicker.

On the 6th, matters mended a little. They proceeded on their course through what might be called an open forest country, but for the acacia bushes. These were coming into flower, and their yellow blossoms made the dark foliage of the gum trees look a little more cheerful. The country was more elevated than the banks of the Lachlan, but the rises and falls were so gentle that it was difficult to pursue them. The only hill met with gave no idea of the country. No remarkable object was to be seen except low hills and valleys, thickly clothed with small trees and bushes. At the eighth mile, on this day, they came upon a small water-hole, which the horses soon emptied, as well as one, two miles further, just at the commencement of a very broken stony range. This latter hole was too muddy for the men's use, yet they would not have been particular, only they hoped to find some better on the

further side of the range. The latter continued in short broken hills for upwards of three miles, and led through a country very distressing to the men and horses. The surface was covered with small fragments of quartz, without herbage of any kind, except iron-bark trees, and acacia thickets between. But for the trees, this was, to all intents, like the stony desert subsequently met with by Sturt, and, no doubt, due to the decomposition of the same kind of sandstone.

At three miles and a half the ground began to descend, and also slightly to improve; but before they reached either grass or water, the party were obliged to encamp, their fatigue being much greater than the pangs of hunger or thirst. Next day, they again set forward, and for more than four miles continued to pass through the same barren country as before. The ground was absolutely covered with different species of acacia, some of which were extremely beautiful; and this was the only redeeming feature of the soil. Oxley had now occasion to be seriously uneasy. Unless some change came, none of the party could hold out much longer. To advance was to depend upon the providential supplies of water which they had met hitherto, and to retreat was hopeless, as they had consumed all the water found upon this route.

The fact is, they were passing through the acacia and mallee scrubs, which lie between all these western waters. It is only the banks of these streams which are good or well clothed with grass. Were there fewer of them, the country between the Blue Mountains and the sea-coast would be an unredeemable desert, until the south bank of the Murray were crossed. It is wonderful to reflect on the luck that attended Oxley so far. His finding water in these scrubs was a mere chance. Nine out of ten exploring parties would have been baffled, and obliged to return upon the second day of entering them.

But as they proceeded the land improved greatly. The marks upon the trees, made by the mogo, or stone axe of the natives, were seen; and some parrots flying over them, revived their hopes of soon reaching water.

They were further fortunate enough to kill a kangaroo, whose flesh formed a seasonable addition to their resources. The country seemed to grow better and better as they advanced, and at the ninth mile of this day's journey, as they slowly ascended a range, low gentle hills and grassy valleys began to appear in the distance. East and west, mountains showed their heads; though in the former direction they were more rugged, with iron-bark trees growing in the interstices of the granite rocks. But there was no water as yet, though there were good hopes of soon finding it in some of the valleys before them. Nor were they disappointed. After going rather more than four miles further, through a very open country, thickly covered with broom grass (killed by frost), they ascended a range of moderate elevation, connected with others lying east and west. Opposite was another rocky range, and, in the valley between, abundance of water. The horses would have died but for this seasonable supply. This was called Emmeline's Valley; it was very richly grassed.

On the 9th, they again started on their journey. For the first three or four miles the country was tolerably open, and clothed with luxuriant grass. But the good land soon ceased. For the remainder of the day's journey they passed over tracts of low barren ridges, covered with iron-bark trees and open valleys. After having travelled fourteen miles, during the latter part of which it rained hard, they encamped on the edge of some open country, which would afford the horses something to eat. The rain prevented their wanting water, otherwise there was none to be had from the ground.

On the 10th, they again journeyed through open forest land with more stony hillocks, though the last three miles were scrubby, and at the end of the brush they reached a chain of ponds. The fall of water in these was to the north. This made them believe that the Macquarrie was not far distant. The country to the east was grassy and good, but to the west very scrubby. As they continued down the ponds (called Coysgaine's Ponds), the country continued open for about five

miles, when they suddenly came upon a large swampy plain, surrounded by the *Acacia pendula*. It was six or seven miles round, and had water upon several parts of it. They fancied that they would come upon the Macquarrie immediately after crossing it, but they were deceived in this. Oxley had not yet recognised the character of Australian rivers. With dry beds in summer, and chains of floods in spring, they flow generally from plain to plain in wet seasons; never, except in rare instances, running in deep channels. Even in the wettest season there is scarcely a stream which does not become lost in large marshy plains in several places upon its course. This was the case with the Lachlan, and the wet plain now met was a trace of the diffused bed of the Coysgaine's Ponds channel.

On the south side of the plain, the party caught sight of a fine mountain range looming, blue, high, and rugged, in the north-east. This was Harvey's Range—the only series of mountains worthy of that name which they had met westward of the Dividing Range, and which they quite equalled in height. From the marshy plain, surrounded by its fringe of antipodean weeping willows, these mountains had a fine bold appearance, refreshing to these men, who were struggling, weary and emaciated, to reach home as fast as they could. They anxiously sighed to see the Macquarrie as they journeyed north. As each successive height and range was crowned, they expected to behold it before them; but each time they were disappointed.

On the 13th, they again set forward, intending, if they did not meet the river that day, to make a more easterly course, as they would be then fully seventy miles north of Bathurst, and parallel with Port Stephens. But it was not seen. On they went, through forests of gum trees, with a tangled growth of acacia bushes between, over barren sandy country with water, but without grass. At every change, they made sure that the river was at hand. But evening came, and they had not yet seen it. They were now one hundred miles north of the Lachlan, and only about seventy west of Bathurst. Where could the Macquarrie have gone?

Unless on the supposition that it had run nearly north from the settlement, it should have been met long ago. It was no use going further north—they were far enough from home as it was, for their provisions were sadly reduced. By great economy, it was hoped that what yet remained might be made sufficient to last for a fortnight longer, and that would be barely sufficient to carry them to Bathurst, supposing no extraordinary obstacle to occur. One may be astonished at the time required to travel seventy miles, but it must be remembered that this was a survey, and in rough country six miles a day was a very large amount of work to get over.

The course was now altered to due east. The land was good open grazing country for about eight miles, but then the surface became broken, hilly, and, though still well grassed, very stony. A little rise gave them the means of viewing the route they had passed over, and the unknown space still before them. The day was calm and clear, with a bright blue sky and a brilliant sun, such as only an Australian spring can show. Behind them the light shone over an unbroken level of brown forest wood, resting so peacefully in the tranquil day, that not a sign of life or a sound could be seen or heard amid it all. For seventy miles the view extended—a perfectly smooth horizon. What made it look so peculiarly dead and even, was the view to the eastward. There, at the distance of five or six miles, craggy precipices and rugged pinnacles of rock lifted their bronzed forms into the view, or shot up in rough spires into the sky. There were the bare brown rocks, with the black interspaces of brush in the foreground, and there were the angular summits in the azure distance, between which almost every gradation of colour occurred. To the north and north-east the view was stopped at about eleven miles by hills of moderate elevation.

The day's journey terminated at a pretty valley, which seemed the commencement of a much better style of country. This was indeed the case. A mile of gently rising ground brought them next day to the edge of a fine valley, in which was a chain of ponds connected by

a small stream. Alternate hills and valleys of the best description of pasture succeeded, wanting but the distant white dots of browsing sheep, or the neat farm-house, to make it look like the home of civilization. To their great surprise, however, even these were not completely wanting, for cattle tracks were seen on some of the hills they passed over. Every now and then the rising ground would bring them in sight of most extensive views, over thirty or forty miles of country. The aspect was clear and open, and the green grass and clumps of trees made the scenery like the park of an English landscape.

On the 16th, quitting the valley, which was called Mary's Valley, they expected to find that it would lead into the Macquarrie, but it did not. The same fine grazing land continued for about four miles. Ascending a high hill, another prospect was obtained. Each new view showed them that the country was growing better and better. Beautiful hills lay all around them, and an extensive valley at their feet. Into the latter they looked eagerly for the Macquarrie, but they could only in its absence tax their imaginations for a water haze, which each one saw in a different direction. Very likely they might have been able to see something more, for the valley was six or seven miles long, but a rocky range in the south, clothed with pines, cut off the view in that direction. They descended into the valley, and travelled north, expecting that it must, of course, terminate in the long-sought river. The vale charmed them with its richness, its beauty, and its fertility. The soil was a light brown loam, covered with grass five or six feet high. It was a lovely spot, and made the men forget their fatigue; and as for the horses, they were walking breast deep in their food.

At four miles they came upon a stream; its banks were high and grassy, and its bottom rocky; though very different from the Macquarrie, at Bathurst, the explorers made sure that it must be the same. And yet it could hardly be. There was scarcely any water; and though it was running, it was certainly doing no more. It should have been known to Oxley by this time that

it could not have been the Macquarrie, for one simple reason. Whatever character an Australian river possesses at one part of its course, that character remains upon the whole. There are but few exceptions to this rule, and these only in the small streams. Take any one to the Murray, or Darling, or Murrumbidgee, and let them become acquainted with the character of the banks, and then, if led blindfold to any part of any of the three, there is not much fear of a mistake occurring as to which river they are upon.

But Oxley accounted for the low state of the Macquarrie. He said that the whole country, from the Lachlan to this stream, bore evident marks of a long-continued drought, and in no part was it more apparent than in this stream. But after going up it for three or four miles, he began to entertain great doubts about its being the river he sought. At any rate, it was not a tributary of the Macquarrie, for he felt confident that he had passed over its watershed. At the place where they camped on this day they saw numerous cattle marks again.

At the end of the valley there was a low range, and then another valley, which was spacious and fertile. It was bounded to the east by low grassy hills, and there was every appearance of a watercourse being in it. As it was five or six miles distant, and access could only be obtained by passing over lofty hills, and through rocky glens, Oxley hesitated a good deal before descending. The glens were so narrow that he feared that they would not be able to follow their windings. The rocks rose in vast perpendicular cliffs, almost barring up the passage. After some little delay, they found a place where the horses could descend in safety. When this was done, they traversed the bottom of the glen, along all its windings, for more than three miles and a half. There was a fine stream running through it, and as they might go further and fare worse in that respect, they camped beside it. The place of the encampment was very beautiful. There was just space enough on each side of the stream for the horses to travel along, the rocks rising almost perpendicular from it, to a towering

height. The scene was dark and romantic. The crags, the silvery stream, and the tall stately trees, made it solemn; but oh! for a painter that should give the scene when the tents were pitched, and the men were seated round a glimmering fire, whose smoke curled noiselessly among the heights, and whose glare cast shadows of the mossy trunks upon the brushwood! As the morning dawned, the glen grew less rough in its aspect. The faces of the cliffs were clothed with flowers, for it was spring time.

Oxley called this, Glen Finlass. He does not tell us why. The name itself is not much, but we have constant reason to deplore, both here and in America, the geographical confusion which results from having home names transplanted by patriotic explorers.

A mile and a half next day brought them into the valley which they had seen on their first descending into the glen. The breadth from the cliffs to the base of the opposite gently rising hills, was between three and four miles. The soil was very good, and studded with fine trees. Its extent, north and south, they could not see. To the west it was bounded by the lofty rocky ranges of their encampment; and in the centre ran a strong and beautiful stream. It was, says the explorer, a charming valley. The limpid water dashed over gravelly pebbles, or large stones, and eddied into deep smooth pools, in which the rays of the sun showed dark recesses and mossy hollows where fishes lurked.

At first, as usual, this was thought to be the Macquarrie. Under this impression, Oxley determined to stop upon its banks for the remainder of the day, and then proceeding southerly to go up towards Bathurst. Whilst waiting for the horses, he determined to see as much of the northern part as he could, and therefore wandered a little from the place he had chosen as an encampment. It was very fortunate that he did so. Had he gone up the stream as he intended, it would have led him away from the river he sought. He had scarcely ridden a mile when he was no less astonished than delighted to find that his brook (Bell's River) joined a very fine river, coming from the east-south-

east among the chain of grassy hills, bounding the east side of the valley on which they were. This then was certainly the long-looked-for river, and the sight of it amply repaid the party for all their former disappointments. It was evident that it received many tributaries; for though it was easily identified as the stream which flowed past Bathurst, it was much larger.

The valley they now left was named Wellington Valley. It has since become distinguished for the singular caves which are found within it, and it was also the starting point of many an exploring expedition in subsequent years. Before journeying towards Bathurst, Oxley was anxious to see as much of the river as possible, and accordingly he went down its banks next day in company with Messrs. Evans and Cunningham. Crossing Bell's River, in the valley, they came in one mile to where the steep rocky hills forming the west side of the vale advance their perpendicular cliffs directly over the channel. These were soon passed, and they entered the vale to the north of them. Alternate fine grazing hills, fertile flats, and valleys formed its general outline. But there were variations in the width which made it extremely picturesque. Sometimes the cliffs from either side advanced and narrowed the channel to a width of sixty or eighty feet, with vast perpendicular rocky heights at either side. Again, they retired into amphitheatres, and the river formed noble reaches two hundred feet wide. The land was as rich as could be imagined. The banks of the reaches were low and shelving, while even at the highest floods there were bergs or second banks, which would restrain any inundation, because they were six hundred to eight hundred feet wide, and the marks of the highest floods upon them did not exceed twenty feet perpendicular.

But for all these advantages the river was not navigable. There were rapids in its bed, formed by strong islands or shallows some hundred yards wide. They were not fordable when Oxley examined them. There were two kinds of rock visible, limestone and granite. The latter was known in many places else-

where, but the former was considered very important. Owing to the predominance of the sandstone on the west side of the range, limestone had become very much needed, for, as yet, there was no prospect of getting mortar unless by an expensive journey over the Blue Mountains. So serious was this inconvenience felt to be, that it had been seriously urged as a reason for making the interior undesirable as a settlement. No wonder, then, that Oxley should hail the discovery of limestone as a great fact—one of the greatest which resulted from his expedition.

For twelve miles he continued through this charming country. The course of the river during the whole distance was due north. At the twelfth mile they came upon a perpendicular limestone rock overhanging the stream; it was covered with a beautiful species of flora; and, a little lower down, the opposite bank of the river was composed of perpendicular red earth cliffs, about sixty feet high, extending three-quarters of a mile along the reach. This was named Red Bank, and was the turning-point of this journey down the Macquarrie River.

On the 22nd, the whole party began to move up the stream towards Bathurst. They had scarcely laden their horses when it began to rain, and as it continued without intermission, they only made about six miles, camping near a very fine reach. The country on both sides was of the greatest possible fertility, beautifully diversified by hills and open valleys. Immense quantities of fine limestone were again found, the rocks being entirely composed of it. But there were more rapids in the river. This fact was unimportant, Oxley says; but the beautiful scenery he was now among made him see everything *couleur de rose*.

On the 23rd August, the last allowance of provisions was served out, and they proceeded up the river with rather sanguine anticipations as to the end of that day's journey. But the country proved rocky and mountainous, which prevented a rapid advance. Points of hills frequently terminated in the river, and in every valley watercourses joined the main stream, all of which took time and labour to cross. The scenery was

beautifully picturesque. Oxley thought that nothing fairer could be seen upon any river; but the beauty of the prospect must have been much marred by the gloomy prospect of next day's rations.

The travelling was excessively bad along the sides and points of the hills; and as Oxley fancied that the level was better in making a direct course for Bathurst, he determined to leave the Macquarrie, and survey upon a straight line. Accordingly, next day, he prepared to quit the river; but now another unexpected difficulty arose. Every moment's delay was of great importance; but difficulties seemed to increase at every step. This morning there was so thick a fog that they could not see fifty yards in any direction. When it cleared away enough for them to leave the river, they passed through a mountainous tract, extremely irregular and stony, but full of springs, water, and good grass. They could not go far or make long stages in such places; and they were deeply disappointed in finding the back country not a tableland, but a succession of ranges.

And thus they continued, ascending and descending, climbing and stumbling, for the next four days. Each day they expected to see Bathurst, as they had before expected to see the Macquarrie; and each day the disappointment was renewed. No actual survey was made now; each man went as quickly as he could, and left the hills and mountain glens unmeasured. Many streams, tributaries of the Macquarrie, were crossed; many glens of perpendicular rocks were passed over, but they remained undescribed. The horses, fortunately, were daily improving; otherwise, the men never could have extricated themselves from the mountain defiles. At last, on the 29th of August, their labours terminated; Bathurst was reached, and Oxley told to the astonished settlers his dismal tale of the interior.

Thus terminated Oxley's expedition of 1817, whence so many erroneous notions about the nature of the continent were derived. It was many years before they were completely dispelled, and the true character of the interior rightly guessed.

CHAPTER X.

OXLEY'S SECOND JOURNEY.

Down the Macquarrie—Mount Harris—Mount Foster—Arbuthnot Range—River overflows—Immense reedy lake—Boat journey—Proceeds eastward—The Castlereagh—Floods—Mount Exmouth—Hardwicke's Range—Wilsden Valley—Quicksands—Lushington's Valley—Liverpool Plains—Peel's River—Passage of the Dividing Range—Apsley River—The Hastings—Port Macquarrie—The Manning.

It was easy to foretell what effect Oxley's revelations would have upon the colonists of New South Wales. It could not be doubted that an expedition would be once more fitted out to explore the Macquarrie; for an extraordinary geographical problem had now to be settled. There were two rivers flowing into the interior of an immense continent. One received no tributaries, but the other did; and, so far as could be ascertained, must flow onward as an immense body of water. Nor did they empty themselves upon the coast—at least as far as it was known. The careful surveys of Flinders and others seemed to render the probability of any large river on the shore very small indeed. Now, if there were no outlet for the drainage from the west side of the Blue Mountains, the water must congregate in the interior in the form of an immense inland lake. To reach this as soon as possible, and explore its broad waters, was the earnest desire of every colonist. No difficulty was anticipated in doing so. The Lachlan, it is true, had terminated in a series of shallow marshes; but then that river received no tributaries in its long course. With the Macquarrie it was far different. The lower its banks were explored, the more tributaries were found; and if there were rapids in the upper

part, the increasing volume of water would make them disappear, until a fine, deep, broad channel was attained, which would bring explorers easily to the vast inland ocean.

This expanse of water, therefore, presented itself to the delighted imagination of the colonists as a splendid area for investigation. It would, of course, have fertile shores and large tracts of available land in its vicinity. Possibly, the furthest mountains of the western coast might be reached by its aid; and, at any rate, the mystery of the interior would be solved with the aid of very simple means. But it would be necessary to wait a little while before starting a second exploring party. As this was to be embarked in boats only, the winter season would be available, because then the Macquarrie would be in flood.

It was not until May of the following year, 1818, that arrangements were definitely made. The command was given a second time to Lieutenant Oxley. With a view to lessen the inconvenience of the preliminary portion of the journey, a party was sent on in advance, to the furthest point on the Macquarrie reached the previous year, there to form a depôt with the bulk of the stores, and two large boats. Oxley arrived at Bathurst, in company with Dr. Harris, on the 25th May, 1818. Some little arrangements having been completed on the 28th, they again set out with the baggage horses and the men which were to compose the expedition. At first, they kept nearly upon the return track of the preceding August; but, on approaching Wellington Valley, by keeping a little more to the westward, they avoided much of the former steep and rugged road, and travelled over open valleys and flats; the hills being all composed of limestone. Thus, with little or no interruption, they reached the depôt on the 2nd June. The boats, stores, &c., had arrived in safety, and all was in readiness for a start.

Having crossed the river, they commenced, on the 6th June, again to penetrate the wilds of the unknown interior. The boats were laden with the stores, and slowly glided down the stream, while the rest of the

party, with the horses, explored along the bank. The journey lay generally amid an open forest country, with rich flats on either side of the stream. But these were occasionally interrupted. High, rocky, limestone hills jutted out at times, as cliffs, close to the channel, and then the horses were obliged to climb the eminences or made considerable *détours*. The ranges were rather stony, and so light was the soil upon them that the least rain made the ground very soft. But, for all these inconveniences, the Macquarrie itself gave compensation by its promising appearance. There were many fine reaches extending in straight lines, from one to three miles, and broad in proportion. There were rapids, it is true, and of rather too frequent occurrence; but there was a good depth of water upon them, so that they offered no obstruction to the boats, and the current, at the same time, was scarcely perceptible.

On the 8th, the river expanded into beautiful reaches, having great depth of water, some five hundred feet broad. They were literally covered with waterfowl of various kinds. The wild ducks flew up in whirling dark clouds, as they passed; and the black swan, uttering its mournful cry, from their very numbers, were able to sail by the boat uninjured, arching their necks disdainfully at the intrusion. Two more tributaries were passed, the same as those channels which had been crossed by the party on the former journey. They both joined on the south bank, on which side there was the greatest extent of rich land. The horses were upon the north side. The land was of various descriptions, with rather many barren and stony hills; but still there was a goodly amount of rich soil in flats, which were not apparently liable to inundation. On the hills were many specimens of agate, ironstone, and jasper; and even where the stones were most abundant, good grass of rich growth everywhere abounded. An excursion to the north-east, made on the 10th, did not show any new features. The country was still low and regular on every side, except to the south, where the distant blue summits of ranges could be seen.

On the 11th, they had proceeded about eighty miles

without meeting any obstruction. The water in the river had risen about a foot during the night, and was now flowing with considerable velocity. Towards evening they came upon a small stream from the eastward, running rapidly. There was a fresh in it, so that it was much too deep and rapid to ford. The horses were therefore unloaded, and the boats used to transport the baggage over; this occupied until night. The camp was pitched at the further side of the new creek, which was named the Erskine, after the lieutenant-governor of the colony. It was the first stream met with flowing from the eastward, and proved the important fact that the Macquarrie was the channel of drainage of a large tract of country to the north-east. The country passed through on this day was of the finest description, and apparently equally good on both sides of the river. Rich flats, bounded by gentle hills, lined the banks of the Erskine. The party had as yet seen no natives, and only very few signs of their visits to these fertile parts.

For many days after crossing the Erskine, their course was through an unvarying country. At first the soil was good, but its quality diminished as they advanced. Little by little, it became poor, and very much intersected with acacia, through which the party had great difficulty in forcing their way. The land on either side of the river was an uninterrupted level plain. A gradual change had taken place in the banks. In the upper part they were high, and the stream broad and deep; but by degrees they became much lower, and the back country evidently subject to inundations. The rapids still continued, but not, as formerly, in the deep parts. Granite rocks now peeped above the surface, making the ultimate navigation of the Macquarrie very questionable indeed. There were no more tributaries either from north or south; but still the river was rising, and looking now not unlike the Lachlan. Oxley had painful misgivings as to the result of this journey. The silent monotony of the rapid stream was ominously like a river he remembered but too well.

On the 23rd June, having come upwards of one

hundred and twenty-five miles from Wellington Valley, he sent back two men to report progress to the governor. He had not much cheering news to give; but still his prospect of reaching the inland sea was not entirely destroyed, and he said so. If the country had not been so terribly level, his hopes would have been greater; but in this respect it was worse than that near the Lachlan. But, on the 27th, a change came. They were all on that day agreeably surprised by the sight of a small hill, about a mile to the eastward. They hastened to it, full of hope that the country to the north would be elevated; but they were disappointed. Nothing was visible, except one hill to the north-east, amid the vast wooded plain which lay at their feet. The other elevation was higher than the one they were upon, which was scarcely seventy feet; it was a barren granite rock, in fact, about a quarter of a mile long, and half as wide.

The hill to the north-east was climbed more anxiously than the first. The view was again a disappointment. The prospect was extensive, for it could not well be otherwise in such a plain; but the very extent was the disheartening part of it. There was no indication of a change of country, or a termination of the river. The only interruption to the wooded level was a clear open space here and there, where a marsh interrupted the boundless ocean of dark-brown foliage. No one who has not seen it can form any idea of the effect of such an expanse upon the mind. The Pacific, with its heaving waves and ever-varying hues of blue, purple, green, and white, is a changeful scene — a perfect kaleidoscope, in comparison with one of these seas of foliage. Sky and trees, blue and brown, are all that lie before you; but had it more variety, it wants the voice of the ocean or its movement—all is silent; all is in still repose. But Oxley saw in all this something more dispiriting than an amateur could detect. The silence and the stillness were the grave of his hopes, until he turned to the eastward.

On that side there was something to cheer him; but, unfortunately, it was not in the direction he wished.

There was a stupendous chain of mountains lifting its rugged huge summits, about seventy miles off. This was too far away to think of exploration there; and Oxley knew nothing about his chances of seeing them on his return. They were named Arbuthnot Ranges, and the hill he was upon was called Mount Harris. The latter was an important hill in this survey, and the one made afterwards in this direction by Sturt. Oxley was destined to go but very little beyond it; but he hardly foresaw then how near he was to the only inland sea he was ever likely to find. There was one small hill a little further on, and this was named after Lieutenant Foster, R.N., whoever he may have been. Both the hills were of granite, and about two miles long, by half a mile wide. Small heaps of granite fragments were heaped about in different directions, and yet there did not appear to be any signs of native habitations about.

They spent one day at Mount Harris, and, on the 29th, proceeded down the stream. This day's journey was an eventful one. They had not gone very far when the river banks were so low, and the water so high, that it was evident they were about to renew their experience at the Lachlan. At five miles from the camp the water was even with the banks, and a little further on it overflowed them. But this might only be a marsh, said Oxley, who hoped against hope. The horses were ordered to be taken round the swampy ground, while the boat kept the main channel. There was great congratulation when it was found that this was only a marsh after all; the whole party encamped together on rather wet ground, and the river was still very high.

Next day, they again advanced full of hope, thinking, perhaps, this might be the only instance of overflow they should find. But their progress was interrupted much sooner than they anticipated. They had hardly gone six miles, when they perceived that the waters which had overflowed the banks were spreading over the plains on which they were travelling, and that with a rapidity which precluded any hope of making the river again to the north-west. This was the direction in

which it was supposed to run. Their situation was critical. A trifling delay might prevent their return. The safety of the whole party appeared to depend upon their reaching the station left that morning as soon as possible. The horses were therefore ordered back. But it was necessary to communicate with the boats. Two men, wading for about three miles up to their waist in water, reached the banks of the stream and hailed the boats as they passed. All were now able to return to the encampment, and while they rested after their severe fatigue, the increase of the flood, and the rapid spreading of the waters, told them that they must soon return to Mount Harris.

Oxley, however, determined to investigate the river as far as possible. He proposed to take the large boat, with four volunteers, and a month's provisions, to explore the channel as far as he could. In the meanwhile, he ordered the rest of the party, with the horses and stores, to return to Mount Harris, which was now about fifteen miles away. They were there to form a depôt, and then Mr. Evans was to proceed fifty or sixty miles to the north-east, in order to find what chances they had of water in that direction, in case they should wish to make for the coast. One would have thought that there need have been no anxiety about want of water, situated as they were; and how much their fears should have taken the other direction the sequel will show.

The 2nd of July commenced as one of the most stormy days they had yet experienced. The wind blew a hurricane, and the rain came down in such torrents, that Oxley was thankful that his party would soon be back at Mount Harris. Having made all his arrangements, he embarked in his boat. When he had gone a little distance the banks disappeared, and a marsh confused the river with the water of the plains. There was, he says, properly speaking, no country. The river overflowed its banks, and divided itself into streams which had no permanent separation from the main branch, but united themselves to it at a hundred points. The boat, however, went in all about twenty-eight miles, when they stopped for the night on a small dry island,

which was scarcely large enough to light a fire upon. The principal stream ran with great rapidity, and its banks, and the neighbourhood, as far as they could see, were covered with wood. Vast spaces which were clear of timber were under water, and covered with reeds which grew six or seven feet above the surface. Meanwhile, the storm raged fearfully, as the explorers slept by the side of their flickering fire, and the dimensions of their little island grew smaller and smaller.

On the 3rd, towards morning, the storm moderated, and at daylight they proceeded on their voyage. The main bed of the river was much contracted, but very deep, the waters spreading to the depth of a foot or eighteen inches over the banks, but these were still keeping on the same bearing. The boat met with considerable interruption from fallen timber, which in places nearly choked up the channel. After going about twenty miles, they lost the land and trees. All around them now was an expanse of water, densely clothed with waving reeds. The depth of the water was not great; on the contrary, it was so shallow, that the boat had not much more than sufficient water to float her. But it was still possible to trace the channel of the river by the open space in the reeds, and by its rapid northerly flow.

Thus they continued for three or four miles further; the green walls of reeds only showing here and there glimpses of their vast extent. Although there had been no change in the breadth, depth, or strength of the current, Oxley was still sanguine in his expectations of soon entering the long-desired inland sea. As long as the channel continued defined, there was no difficulty in advancing, and he did not doubt that the reeds were on the edge of the great fresh-water ocean, into which he was sweeping rapidly. But a sudden change came which destroyed his hopes. All at once the channel failed. It unexpectedly spread out on every point from north-west to north-east, and quite eluded further investigation amid the ocean of reeds which surrounded them. There was no channel whatever among the reeds, and the depth varied from three to five feet in

the marsh over which they were floating. Oxley looked around him in vain. He sounded, and explored, and searched in every direction. But it was of no use. The channel had disappeared. He stood up in the boat and gazed around him. Water and reeds met his gaze upon every side without a sign of the Macquarrie on any side. With a heavy heart, he resolved on the only alternatives now left him—and they were, first to retrace his path, and next to find a place where he might rest that night.

We may easily imagine how puzzled and worn-out poor Oxley was that evening. What his reflections were, we can fortunately learn from his journal, an extract from which here follows. Readers may perhaps smile at many of the views here advanced, but however amusing it may be to view these oracular theories, aided by recent discoveries, we must admit that appearances almost justified the opinion he formed.

"To assert," he says, "positively, that we were on the margin of the lake or sea into which this great body of water is discharged, might reasonably be deemed a conclusion which has nothing but conjecture for its basis; but if an opinion may be hazarded from actual appearances, mine is decidedly in favour of our being in the immediate vicinity of an inland sea or lake—most probably a shoal one, and gradually filling up by immense depositions from the higher lands left by the waters which flow into it. It is most singular that the high lands on this continent seemed to be confined to the sea coast, or not to extend to any great distance from it."

Nearly sixty miles had Oxley come from Mount Harris, and this distance he proceeded to retrace as rapidly as his men could row. On the 7th, he reached his depôt camp. Mr. Evans had just started on his journey to Arbuthnot Range. Of course, Oxley had to wait his return, and this did not take place until the 18th. This was a long delay for the party, but it could not be helped. The marsh prevented any exploration, except in the way they had come, or the way the advance party had gone. While they waited, the

swamps of the Macquarrie rose higher and higher, until Mount Harris was almost completely surrounded, and the water had nearly reached Mr. Oxley's tent.

Mr. Evans reported that he had been unable to follow the north-east course as directed, because in that direction he came across many channels flowing through high reeds. About fifty miles from Mount Harris a large river was crossed; it was wider than the Macquarrie, but not so deep, and ran to the north. It was named the Castlereagh. Its bed was nearly a hundred yards wide, and its banks eight or nine feet high A little further on, another stream was crossed, and then the country became so bad, that Mr. Evans gave up the idea of reaching Arbuthnot Range, which was the only elevation now visible all round the horizon. The country passed through was low, flat, marshy, and covered with *Acacia pendula.* In returning, the party took a more northerly course, where the ground, though wet, was much better than where they had passed before.

This bad news did not deter Oxley. There was nothing left him except to retrace his steps, or go to Arbuthnot Range, and the latter course he courageously resolved upon. On the 20th July he broke up his camp, and made straight for the ranges to the east. The course was alternately over wet flats and dry scrub, with, occasionally, very boggy ground. In the latter, the country was so level that the smallest inequality could not be discovered, and yet there was a fall to the northward, for the waters ran very rapidly in that direction. Two chains of ponds were passed, namely, Morrissett's and Wallis's Ponds. On the 25th, they reached the Castlereagh, which was now so high that there was not the slighest chance of crossing it until the waters subsided. The water was only level with the first or lower bank, but the weather continued fearfully wet, and it rose so rapidly, that the bank upon which they were was the only spot not merged in a universal inundation. For seven days they were confined to this small spot, with dreary sheets of water all around them, and not until the 2nd August were they able to ford the river.

It was about the 7th that they reached one of the outlying hills of the range to which they were journeying. Their trials during the interim cannot be exaggerated: they were nearly all the time either wading through water up to their waists, or staggering through bogs and quagmires, so that ten miles' journey for men and horses was a day's work of fearful fatigue. But they reached more elevated ground at last. It was only a limestone hill, it is true, and Arbuthnot Range lay still five miles away; but they were at least off the boggy ground, and their sufferings in that way had terminated for a time. The range now loomed before them with great magnificence: its sides were clothed with timber, and the gullies were here and there grassy, but the summits were naked, sharp rocks, which threw out a bold and jagged outline into the sky. The northern extremity of the range was named Mount Exmouth, the centre Mount Harrison, and the southern end Vernon's Peak. Mount Exmouth was the highest, and on the 8th August they started to ascend it. At its base they crossed a pretty stream of water, which had its source in the mount, and meandered over the plains in a more picturesque manner than water had appeared to do since the early part of their journey. It took nearly two hours' hard labour to ascend the rugged summit, but they were rewarded by a most extensive view of the surrounding country.

To the west, Mounts Harris and Foster, whose elevation did not exceed 300 feet, were plainly visible at a distance of eighty-nine miles. These two spots excepted, from north to south it was as level as the sea. To the east the aspect was varied enough: the hills were innumerable, and, amid the smaller ones, mountains of considerable elevation raised their heads from time to time, crowned with perpendicular rocks of every shape and variety, all showing the barren red fronts, and the horizontal strata of the Blue Mountain sandstone. To this grand and picturesque scenery, Mount Exmouth presented a perpendicular cliff of at least 1000 feet high, when its descent became more gradual to its base in the fair valley beneath. The height of the mountain is

altogether about 3000 feet, forming a splendid foreground to the scene which lies below its precipices.

On the north-east the view was rendered more beautiful by the grey outlines of a lofty and magnificent range of hills, which could. not have been much less than one hundred and twenty miles distant. They were called the Hardwicke Range, and its highest elevations were named respectively Mount Aspley and Mount Shirley. The country between Mount Exmouth and this boundary range was broken into rugged hills, and apparently deep valleys, with several minor ranges of hills. The high lands from the east to the south-east gradually lessened to the north-west, where they were lost in the immense level, which extended to the westward like a dark abyss, in which both water and mountain were alike hidden. Mount Exmouth seemed to be principally composed of the ironstone which was found upon it. Its perpendicular cliffs were basaltic, according to Oxley's description. Mount Harris, on the contrary, was of granite, like that found upon the Lachlan.

On the 10th, Oxley proceeded on his journey, in a north-east course, over low forest hills of good land. The next day, however, the road became boggy, because they were entangled amid the streams which flow from the east side of Arbuthnot Range. They could not keep their course, for they were glad to follow good sound land wherever they could find it, and this was certainly not everywhere. On the 13th, they only made six miles, and even in the course of that short distance the horses had to be unladen; in fact, they were almost submerged in a sort of quicksand, and the men had to carry the baggage, piece by piece, across about half a mile of ground before the animals could be loaded again. The soil consisted of about two or three inches of light mould, and eighteen inches of sand, upon a rocky bottom. When trodden upon, the water would squirt up, and the ground give way like mere mud, but would close firmly round immediately after, so that it held the horses' legs like a vice.*

* These quicksands are common throughout the Australian continent, and are known by a name which is more characteristic than elegant.

Quicksands of a similar nature prevented their reaching a small creek running under a high, craggy ridge of hills; and they, therefore, stopped at the edges of them, every one completely worn out with his exertions. The appearance of the country passed over was most desolate and forbidding, but quite open, and interspersed with miserable rocky crags, on which gum and cypress trees grew. Impeded by rain and quicksand, they only advanced very slowly, even taking into account the immense number of deviations from their course which they were obliged to make. They succeeded, however, on the 15th, in gaining some stony hills, which, with two or three intervening marshy valleys, continued for the rest of the day's journey, the latter part being up rocky, barren hills, with narrow defiles. From these heights they descended into a pretty valley, of considerable extent, and, to their great joy, of sound firm soil—a luxury they were long unused to. This valley was named Wilsden Valley, and was enclosed on all sides, except the north, by lofty rocky hills of coarse sandstone.

Delayed by rain, they went but slowly down this valley. Its end led them over barren stony ranges, with marshy hollows of pure sand between them. It was not until the evening of the 18th that any change came. They then entered a very thick forest: the trees were not large, and had been lately burnt; their black stems and branches, with the dull bluish colour of their foliage, gave the place a singularly dismal and gloomy appearance. So thick was the forest that they could hardly turn the horses, nor could the sun's rays penetrate to the sandy soil upon which these trees grew; yet, in spite of the dense growth of wood, the ground was treacherous in the extreme. Without the least appearance of a bog, the horses would suddenly sink, floundering into a quagmire. What with trees and quicksands, their situation was very distressing. They could not see which way to turn, and, finally, they were obliged to traverse the margin of an extensive quicksand for nearly three miles, in a direction contrary to their course, before they could find firm ground, or water for

the horses. The quicksands rose up in such numbers around them that they were almost in despair. On the 19th, they did nothing but travel in circles, round and round; first avoiding one bog and then another; until the exhaustion of the horses obliged them to stop. On the 20th, after travelling about nine miles, and having, at the risk of their lives, pushed the horses through some of the minor branches of the bog, what was their mortification to find they were only about one hundred yards from the place from which they had set out. They had at first attempted to cross the minor bog in a northerly direction, and afterwards had kept along its edge, southerly, and the result was that they found it to extend in a complete circle around them. From a slight rise in the centre of it, they could see the country northward. It was low and uneven. Hardwicke's Range was distant now about forty miles.

The result of this day's exertion quite subdued their fortitude: they knew not which way to turn themselves, and were almost inclined to despair. To return to Arbuthnot Range, and again undergo what they had already so bitterly experienced, could not be thought of. It was decided to travel back far enough to reach the high lands, and then keep more to the south-east. This they expected to do by Saturday evening. Twenty miles back, they had left land of considerable elevation, and they could only hope that in its vicinity they would find a dry ridge to take them where they proposed going.

On the 23rd August, they returned to Parry's Rivulet, within twelve miles of Wilsden Valley, which was the whole distance they had gone towards the coast, although they had travelled over seventy. Their course was now up the banks of the rivulet, on a southerly course. They experienced fewer difficulties than hitherto in this direction, and at evening entered a good forest in a valley, with tolerable grass. Better days now began to dawn upon them. On the 25th, when three or four miles from their last camp, a splendid view began to unfold before them. About fifteen miles in advance, from the south-east to east,

there were forests, hills, and extensive flats: the latter had not an encouraging appearance. The plains were quite destitute of timber, and white, as if covered with salt. Neverthless, they moved as rapidly as they could towards them. Their journey was over very boggy, rugged country, and they camped in a valley, bounded east and west by rocky hills, with good soil and better grass.

On the 26th, while Mr. Evans proceeded with the horses to the plains, Lieutenant Oxley went towards a spacious valley before him. This he soon reached, and travelled down its centre, along the banks of a beautiful stream of water, which fertilized and drained it. The extent of this valley to the south-west could not be discovered, as it windings were lost amid the forest hills, which swelled in slowly fading outlines into the far distance. Oxley then went down between seven and eight miles to the east, and regained the horses at the base of an elevated, conical hill, standing detached at the east end of the valley, which was here four or five miles wide. On ascending this hill, the view was on all sides the most varied and encouraging. Hills, dales, and plains, of the richest description, lay before them. They were bounded to the east first by low mounds, and then by elevated mountains, which seemed lofty and grand enough to be the great coast range of the Blue Mountains. Hardwicke's Range was now only thirty-five miles distant: an extensive valley, eight or ten miles wide, led up to it.

In this great valley were numerous hills and plains thinly studded with timber, and watered by a stream, down the banks of which they had travelled. From its eastern side the slopes rose to a loftier elevation, but were still thinly timbered and covered with grass. To the south-east very lofty forest hills bounded plains which were at least twenty-five miles wide in some parts, and forty in others. These were the plains seen the day before, whose white appearance made Oxley imagine that they were covered with salt. In this respect he was agreeably disappointed. He found them to consist of rich, dry, vegetable soil; and though from

their vast extent they were called plains, yet the surface was slightly broken into gentle eminences, with occasional clumps of timber, or dotted lines of trees. The white appearance was, fortunately, not owing to salt; but the grass had been burnt early in the year, and the young growth had subsequently been killed by the frost. In any case, the plains of grass in Australia are not green, except in the early spring. The fields at a distance are a pale yellow, and corn fit for reaping, fully realizes the scriptural saying, of being white for the harvest; for that is the colour which the fields then assume.

The little rivulet which watered the north-west side of this tract of country had overflowed recently; but the ground left by the retreating waters was as firm and solid as the rest: the sides of the hills were of the same black mould as the plains; above this, they were generally capped with basaltic columns, piled with all the fantastic irregularity assumed by that rock—the spectacle altogether was a beautiful one, forming no exception to the almost universal rule in Australia, that where volcanic rock is found, there also is splendid scenery and rich soil. The plains were called after Lord Liverpool, and the valleys around after various members of his cabinet, or political celebrities of the day. The country seemed uninhabited by the natives. It lay under the sun with its rich land, its hills, and its park-like clumps of trees, only wanting the hand of man to utilize it. It seems almost a pity to have broken in upon its loneliness, and bring upon it towered cities and the busy haunts of men; but the charm of its solitude was to bid farewell, when Oxley's party gazed upon it.

They now pursued their way across the plains to the distant hills which fringed the further side of them. They had hardly gone six miles when they came upon a fine stream of water crossing from south to north: this seemed the only drainage that there was, for the rest of the water seemed to collect upon the surface in large pools. From the banks of the stream, Oxley could see that the plains divided into three large branches. Of the extent of the two external sides,

he could only judge from the lofty chain of hills which seemed to bound them in the distance. Hardwicke's Range was one of these boundaries; but beautifully picturesque low hills and valleys intervened between.

The first day's journey on Liverpool Plains was to a hill, named View Hill, about fourteen miles from their last camp. Chains of low forest hills were scattered here and there, on which the black looking trees which swept up the slopes gave a life-like and a sort of mournful appearance; and yet the scene was picturesque in the extreme; for the acacias and Australian apple were in flower, adding their brilliant colours to the landscape and their fragrant odour to the breeze.* But travelling was not so pleasant as the scenery. Heavy rains had made the rich loose loam into a stiff clay, as awkward for men and horses as a ploughed field: this was more annoying, as they saw at the time an immense number of kangaroos and emus, of which they would have killed more than they did, had the horses been able to run upon the clay as easily as the dogs.

It took, in all, three days to cross the Liverpool Plains, and then they rested one day on the edge of an extensive flat, bounded on the far side by the range of mountains seen from Lushington's Valley, and which was named Melville's Range: this name has been met many times before in connection with other explorations. The fact is, our coast is burdened with every possible change upon the name of Saunders Dundas, Viscount Melville; because that famous individual happened to have been once a Lord of the Admiralty, and subsequently lost the office, as is well known. Mount Dundas was, of course, the name given to the mount by the side of the encampment; and, be pleased to remark, that this name occurs in other parts of the coast—one hardly knows how many; so fond were naval men either of ignoring the discoveries of others, currying favour with patrons, or creating endless geographical confusion.

From Mount Dundas, they crossed the flat before

* Where the acacia grows abundantly, the odour in spring from the blossoms scents the air for miles around, and becomes sometimes quite overpowering. The smell is like that of English Hawthorn (May).

them. The centre of it was occupied by a river flowing to the north-west over a broken but very picturesque country. This stream was only a tributary of a fine river—the Peel, which they met further on; which, like the Macquarrie, seemed a sort of channel for the western waters into the unknown interior. If the occurrence of rich and fertile tracts had formerly delighted them, they were nothing to the country before them. Their journey now lay through lands of surpassing richness and peaceful beauty. To particularize their daily discoveries would be tedious, from the sameness, in point of fertile splendour, which all parts possessed. It was the Wellington Valley country over again, of the same character and from the same causes. The Peel is one of the branches of the Darling; or rather one of the feeders of that great stream, which winds over thousands of miles of land before it reaches the sea upon the south coast: it flows down the Goulburn Valley, and, like all the western valleys of the watershed, is carpeted with mossy verdure and decked with all the glories of the Australian flora. Oxley struck away from the Peel at the junction of the Cockburn River—another charming variety of craggy features and flowery rivulets. It was evident that they were approaching the Dividing Range, or the continuation of the Blue Mountains.

On the 7th of September, they commenced ascending the last and most precipitous portion of the country, which had been gradually ascending for the last thirty miles. The same day, they reached what appeared to be the summit of the range—not the Dividing Range; they were not to get over *that* so easily; but the outside range they were upon, and they had a view from it over the fertile country behind, besides a glimpse of the road before them to the eastward—the latter broken and very hilly. To men weak and worn-out, it gave a discouraging prospect of their labours for some days; but, unfortunately for their comfort, the idea was only a very faint representation of the reality. The ridge they were upon soon expanded northward, into a broad surface of open forest land; while a stream in

the same direction showed its silvery windings in the eastern valley below them.

As soon as they had commenced ascending the Dividing Range, a remarkable change took place in the appearance of the country. The boxwood gum was replaced by the lofty blue gum, which grew in great luxuriance, and threw up its massive boughs in tiers like terraces along the mountain sides. Until now, this species had not been seen by the explorers, except near running streams. Stringy bark trees were also seen—so called, because the rough bark has a brown tenacious fibre, like that of the cocoa-nut, which can be split off in sheets to make the roofs of houses, or unravelled into a fibre that will tie like string. The soil, too, had changed from the Liverpool Plains: it was no longer the rich black mould, but a stiff, yellow, tenacious clay, which supported a little grass of inferior kinds. The stone was the same as that in the Blue Mountains near Sydney—the reddish sandstone, of which the reader will hear enough before these volumes close.

Down the valley the party went, and camped by the side of the mountain stream. Next day, they began to ascend again; and, on the 10th, the summit of a new range was reached. Then they partly understood the terrible nature of the task upon which they were engaged. They saw the true nature of the country before them. From north to south it was broken into perpendicular rocky ridges, and divided by deep and impassable gorges—the latter differed in character from those in the Blue Mountains near Sydney; for the precipices abutted upon fine open forest land, which appeared of the richest soil. The rocks again were more like basalt than sandstone. This was, so far, encouraging; but the country to the eastward seemed even more unequal and broken, and with great misgivings they moved onward in that direction. Their misgivings were not ill-founded. On the 11th, their progress was stopped by a tremendous ravine, running north and south. Its breadth at the bottom was only one hundred to two hundred feet, whilst the separation of the outer edges was from two to three miles: it was three

thousand feet deep. To descend was out of the question: the slopes were so steep and so covered with loose stones that an attempt to descend, even on foot, was impracticable.

From either side of this abyss small ravines of similar character diverged, and the distance between these seldom exceeded half a mile. They all had small rills of water trickling down their sides, but it was impossible to say which way the water at the bottom of the valley ran, for the current was concealed by a thicket of vines and creeping plants. In the far distance, to the eastward, the coast was plainly visible, but the intervening country was of terrible aspect. It was of equal height, and not at all broken by mountain peaks or lofty elevations; but, to make up for this, it was fissured by enormous glens and refts, like the one upon the edges of which they were now standing.

It was no use trying to cross this ravine, the only thing, therefore, was to keep to the south, along the edge, and look for some favourable place for descending. They hoped that the valley waters would run in a northerly direction, in which case they might chance to light upon the watershed, between it and the Hunter River. If, on the contrary, the waters ran southerly, their junction with the same river might suit their purpose just as well.

During the whole of the 12th, they were obliged to keep along the edge of the glen. Oxley says in his journal, that "it would be impossible to form any idea of the wild magnificence of the scenery without the aid of Salvator's pencil." Such a painter would find here an ample field for genius, and the mountain a genius worthy only of them. The glen led them to the westward, but there were others which fell into it from the southward, and they perceived that the waters ran north-easterly, which gave them hopes of soon reaching the head. Several times in the course of the day they attempted to descend on foot, but after getting a few hundred yards, with much difficulty, they were always stopped by perpendicular precipices. The ridge was very stony, and thickly timbered with gum trees and

shea oaks of a lofty kind, with pretty good grass between them.

As they advanced, the stream in the valley became larger and larger, until it was a regular river. This embarrassed their journey considerably, because the number of tributaries increased, and each tributary had a glen belonging to it, which caused the party to deviate very much from the way they wished to go. On the second day after the discovery of the glen, their course was stopped at the edge of a magnificent waterfall. It was a small river which came down a glen to join the valley stream, and meeting at the edge of the ravine with a precipice, went tumbling over it in splendid cataracts and broken falls, until it reached the river about a mile below. While on the edge of the fall, it commenced raining heavily, so that they were obliged to remain here a day or two, much against their will. During the interval, men were sent to examine in front of them for some passage over the glen. Two of the men traced it up so far as to ascertain that the river which so embarrassed them was identical with one they had crossed just before climbing the last range. It entered into the glen in a fall of vast height, but above it there was no difficulty in crossing, as the country became clear and of moderate elevation.

On the 15th September, they first attempted the pass nearest to them, which was reported to be practicable. The horses, with tolerable ease, descended the first ridge, which was about one-third down, but it was impossible to proceed one step further with them, and it was only with the utmost difficulty that they were got back again. Three of them rolled over, and were saved from being precipitated to the bottom by the thick growth of trees. Thus the first pass was given up. Quitting it, they proceeded to the next glen. Here many streams fell over perpendicular heights, which were awful to gaze upon, apart from the beauty of the numerous cascades. It was no use attempting a descent there, so they went five or six miles further. This brought them to that part of the river which enters the glen, after passing through a picturesque and level

country. This was the finest cataract of all those found in these mountains. It surpassed all the others in splendour and magnificence. The river, after flowing through the broken country just named, here divided into two streams, the whole width of which is about seventy yards. At this spot the mountains seem cleft in twain, and divided to their very foundations. A ledge of rocks, two or three feet above the level of the other side, divide the waters into two, which, falling over a perpendicular rock 240 feet high, forms a grand cascade. At a distance of 300 yards from the fall the party were wetted by the spray, which arose like a small rain from the bottom. The noise was deafening, and if the river had been full, so as to cover its entire bed, would have been much more grand and sublime. But this was not the whole of its beauty or sublimity. Oxley and his men looked down upon a series of falls, rapids, and cascades, which made the windings of the stream seem now frosted—and again like burnished silver. After the first fall, the water wound through the cleft rocks for about 400 yards, and then fell again about a hundred feet in a single sheet. It then continued in a succession of smaller falls, about a quarter of a mile lower, where the cliffs are of perpendicular height, on either side exceeding 1000 feet, and only about 200 yards wide. From thence the stream descends as a fall, and is then lost to view because of the narrowness and depth of the gullies through which it runs. What gave the scene a more romantic aspect was, that the rocks were all slates, whose grey or blue colour made the dark chasms much more sombre in character. They were divided by jagged refts, which would seem almost to fit into each other if they were joined again. The whole country has undergone changes which give it a peculiar character, and no one can dismiss from his mind the impression when gazing on the wild confusion with which the rocks are piled, that these changes have been of a very violent character.

The fall, and the river itself, were named respectively, Bathurst Fall and Apsley River. It had taken them a week to cross the latter, but as they now knew

that its direction was to the coast, they hoped to be able to trace it to its mouth. It was soon found impossible to do this. The course of the river was to the north, and they wanted to go east. Thus the discovery of the Lower Apsley, from its mouth in Tryal Bay, was made by a surveyor from Sydney, who named it the M'Leay River.

As they proceeded eastward, they found better travelling amid the hills, but the soil was a poor clay, and the timber not so large as usual. There was much good land in the gullies, through every one of which a stream of water took its course to the Apsley. Twelve miles from the latter, they arrived on the banks of a considerable stream in a wide valley. This was named the Croker River. Their journey from thence, until the 22nd of September, was through forests and along deep valleys, often crossing small streams, and skirting large hills. The latter became more and more difficult, until on the date just named, their track was a continual ascending and descending over frightful precipices, so covered with shrubs and creeping vines, that a path had continually to be cut through them. To add to their hardships, it rained incessantly, and was so thick and dark, that it was with difficulty they could see enough to avoid being dashed to pieces. About two hours before sunset, after a descent of upwards of five thousand feet, they were all at the bottom of a glen, through which ran a small rivulet, falling to a still greater depth over rocky precipices.

The opposite side was a mountain equally steep, and in all respects like the one they had just descended. The horses were so weak that it was impossible they could take their loads up it, and yet they could not stop where they were, for there was no grass, and scarcely even room to lie down. The only resource was to abandon their stores and provisions for the present. All the heavy luggage was therefore left behind, and by unremitted exertions they were able to gain a small spot of ground or terrace, intermediate between the top and the gulf below. It was late in the evening before even this much was accomplished. All the horses could not be

brought up. Two were unable to move either with or without a load. Their position this night was the worst one of all the journey. The rain ceased about nine o'clock, and was succeeded by a storm of wind which terrified even the naval experience of Lieutenant Oxley. It was not exactly the wind which they feared, but he could hear amid the storms the trees around him falling; and as his camp was in the midst of the forest, he expected to be crushed to death every moment. It was the most awful storm any of the men had ever seen, but towards midnight it passed away.

Next day, the rest of the baggage was brought up to the terrace, while Oxley explored the range. He proceeded to the top of the mountain, which was two miles distant, and very abrupt in places; but on gaining the summit he had a most magnificent view. To the north and south the country was mountainous, and more broken than they had yet seen, but, fortunately, not in the direction of their path. The sea was at least fifty miles away, but every point of its outline was plainly visible. This was called Seaview Mountain. The ascent of the rest of the party with the baggage was worse than anything they had yet undergone. One of the very strongest of the horses actually burst with the exertion of toiling up the mountain side, so that the entrails trailed upon the ground when it reached the summit. Of course, it was immediately shot.

The descent of Seaview Mountain was as memorable to the party as the ascent. It occupied the whole of the 24th, though the distance was only two miles and three-quarters. The extraordinary steepness made the principal difficulty, and the utmost care was necessary to prevent the horses being dashed to pieces. Only one consideration made them descend at this spot, and that was, that they were upon the top of a hill, and must come down somehow.

Seaview Mountain terminated in a narrow, steep valley, through which a small stream ran. It soon joined a large river, running from the northward. This was named the Hastings. Their journey, for many days, was simply down the river valley, on an almost

due-east course. The Hastings was found to be joined by many tributaries, the principal of which were named the Forbes, the Ellenborough, and the King. The soil gradually improved as they advanced, getting not only richer and more thickly grassed, but supporting a very thick growth of bushes and trees. Near the coast, the land was of surpassing richness; and their progress was much impeded by the tangled vegetation of the forest, through which they had many times to cut a road. But such difficulties were not felt so severely in the country they were in, which was beautiful enough to make all labours seem light. The river was now a broad, placid sheet of water, which wound in and out amid the thick bush, and seemed at every fresh bend to offer new features of tranquil beauty. The brush, where thick, was dense with a most luxuriant vegetation, amongst which were lofty, graceful trees of Australian mahogany and Sydney cedar. When the party were close to the coast, and the roar of the surf had made the proximity of the sea evident, the brush became more open. But still their progress was but slow. They had now to cross the junctions of many rivers, which were near the termination of their courses, and, therefore, broad and formidable.

On the 8th October, they terminated the second stage of their journey. On that day they passed over three miles of good country, three or four miles south of the river, and afterwards came to a large fresh-water lake, seven miles in circumference. This was a beautiful sheet of water, which would have secured a lengthened examination at any other time; but now all was haste to the coast. Passing by its broad, sunny expanse, over which a fresh breeze was blowing, they came to a small but deep stream. This was too deep to ford, so they had to construct a temporary bridge across it; and then, after twelve weeks' travelling from the Macquarrie River, they arrived on the sea shore, in a harbour at the mouth of the Hastings, named Macquarrie Harbour.

Lest any reader should have perused this narrative of Oxley's journey without paying particular attention

to the bearings, or consulting the map, let him not for a moment imagine that Oxley had reached an unknown part of the coast. The route had been first nearly north-north-west, and then due east, so that his track would form a very obtuse angle. Port Macquarrie, as a port, was not known, neither had the River Hastings been previously discovered, but the coast near both had been laid down by many surveyors; for it was not very far north of Sydney. The harbour was found, even in Oxley's cursory examination, to be useless for any but very small vessels; but the country around was really good, and seemed a favourite resort for natives, who were extremely peaceable in their demeanour.

On the 12th, Oxley and his companions set out to proceed down the coast towards Port Jackson. All they could now hope to discover would be rivers which might have escaped the notice of those who surveyed the coast line from the sea. At first, there did not seem to be much chance of even this much discovery, for though they passed many small streams and large lagoons, still a river, properly speaking, they did not see. But, on the 19th, they met with one much larger than they desired, for it was so deep and wide that they could not hope to ford it, and to go round the head of such a large stream was a journey which the extent of their provisions would not allow. A piece of extraordinary good luck now came to their assistance. As they had passed along the sands, they had fallen in with a stranded boat. It was about fourteen miles behind them; but the exertion of bringing it up that distance seemed the least of the difficulties between which they were placed. Their condition was very desperate, for their provisions were low, and the horses so exhausted that they were dying day by day. With great energy and perseverance the boat was brought up on the shoulders of the men. The inlet was crossed. The rest of their journey, after crossing this river (the Manning), was occupied with skirmishes with the natives, who made several treacherous and murderous attacks upon them. One man was speared and danger-

ously wounded, while Messrs. Evans, Oxley, and Harris had one or two very narrow escapes.

The provisions at last became so low that Oxley went on with an advance party to get assistance for his comrades. After many more difficulties and dangers, the former reached Newcastle, on the Hunter, on the 5th November; and thus terminated Oxley's second expedition.

The results of this journey, if they did not succeed in discovering the inland sea, as anticipated, still gave an important increase to the knowledge of the interior. The only real advantage seen by the colonists was the discovery of the Liverpool Plains. And even this much had a great drawback. They were inaccessible from the coast, in consequence of the mountainous country met by Oxley, in what is now termed New England; and the distance by the western plains seemed too great to make them immediately available. A new and short track to Liverpool Plains became the next problem for solution in Australian geography. But, for the present, the colonists were tired of the subject. They had been rather too eager for the last year or so, and now continued disappointments had brought a consequent reaction. Strictly speaking, the discovery of an inland sea should have been the greatest possible disappointment to a colonist who wished well to Australia; but they did not view it in that light. It was a disappointment; and when Oxley (who was sent to survey Macquarrie Harbour further) reported that the mouth of the Hastings was a bar harbour, the ardour for exploration became completely extinguished, and the subject was dropped.

CHAPTER XI.

CAPTAIN KING'S EXPLORATIONS.

North-west Cape—Exmouth Gulf—Curlew River—Dampier's Archipelago—Goulburn Islands—Mount Norris and Raffles Bay—Port Essington—Popham Bay—Visit from the Malays—Van Diemen's Gulf—Alligator River—Melville Island—Apsley Strait—Port Hurd—Clarence Strait.

WHILE the people of Sydney were, for the present, weary of the subject of exploration, the Government of Great Britain became interested in having the rest of the Australian coast properly explored and surveyed. Since the time of Flinders nothing had been done, and the publication of his voyages, in 1814, probably aroused the authorities to the importance of completing the work which he had left unfinished. Though the French expedition, under Commodore Baudin, had visited some few parts of the north and north-west coast, still they had scarcely ever landed, and, as far as the north part of the coast was concerned, had not often even seen the mainland. The whole of the north and north-west remained, therefore, to be explored. In the year 1817, there was little besides surveying for the navy to do, and among the numerous voyages upon which it was so honourably and usefully employed, the coasts of Australia were not forgotten.

An expedition for the purpose of completing the survey of the north and north-west coast was planned, under the joint direction of the Admiralty and the Secretary of State for the Colonies, and the command given to Captain Philip Parker King. He was to proceed to Sydney, and, when there, the governor of New South Wales was instructed to give up to his use any vessel in the colonial marine establishment which should

be deemed capable of the service, or, in the event of there being none such, to purchase one.

Captain King was then directed to take up the survey of the coast from the point where it was abandoned by Flinders, and explore westward. That is to say, he was to examine from Arnhem Bay, near the western entrance of the Gulf of Carpentaria, west and south as far as the north-west cape, including the deep opening called Van Diemen's Bay, and the islands in the neighbourhood of Dampier's first visit.

The first difficulty experienced by King was in getting a vessel to suit his purpose. After some delay, he purchased a small, teak-built cutter, named the *Mermaid*, of only eighty-four tons burden. Her advantages were, that she was very new, and only drew nine feet of water. She was soon fitted with every requirement for an exploring voyage; and with a crew of twelve men and two boys, besides Messrs. Bedwell and Roe,* as mates, and Mr. Allan Cunningham, the celebrated botanist.

On the 22nd December, 1817, the *Mermaid* set sail. Captain King did not intend to proceed at once to Arnhem Bay. Various considerations induced him to sail for the north-west coast first, and survey to the east, instead of from the east coast to the west. On the way round, he called at Oyster Harbour, King George's Sound, where he remained ten days, getting wood and water. There was little change in the place since Flinders had visited it, but all traces of his garden and the seeds he sowed had disappeared. The trees cut down had been burnt or had grown up again, so that no one could have told that a European had ever visited the bay before.

From King George's Sound, King was very anxious to have examined the west coast, but he was prevented from doing so because of the sickness which spread suddenly amongst his crew. And thus it was that he

* Mr. Roe may be termed the father of modern explorers. He is still alive, after having conducted some of the most famous land expeditions into the western interior. No explorer has ever been out with so many different parties. He is now surveyor-general in Perth, West Australia, and the author is under many obligations to him for help during the course of this work.

could not approach the shore until in lat. 21° 45′. This was on the 10th of February, 1818. On that day he saw the south part of North-west Cape—a projection of the land seen and named by Dampier. The view had nothing very encouraging about it. The coast is rather elevated, and forms a scene quite in keeping with the tropical climate of that latitude. Its cliffs are red, sandy-looking rock, scantily scattered over with shrubs. This is the only vegetation about, and it looks anything but verdant or fertile. The shore is fronted with rocks, that extend three or four miles into the sea, causing the huge rollers which break upon them to become white with foam, and casting continued columns of spray into the air. There was a steep slope to the north, but beyond this the land continued, as far as a few miles, in what was evidently a low sandy plain.

King steered in between the cape and the low breakers. No sooner was he under the lee of the land than he felt the influence of the country which was before him. The air, which was before pleasant and refreshing, became so heated as to produce a scorching sensation, and the thermometer rose to ninety in the shade. The atmosphere became choked with flies and dragon-flies, and the sea swarmed with turtles, snakes, sharks, and dolphins. The scene as described by King, with its scorching air, its copper-coloured sky, its red cliffs, and its writhing mass of life beneath the waters, reminds one of the calm in the poem of the "Ancient Mariner." Surely this cannot be a very delectable place to live upon, and seeing how unanimous is the opinion of all explorers on the subject, we might venture to hope that there are not many such in the world.

The *Mermaid* steered slowly round the cape, the men looking anxiously as she moved round to see what change took place in the land. But it fell calm when they were four miles to the eastward, and they could only trace the low land disappearing in the south-west. They were obliged to anchor. That night the wind freshened, and made the cutter ride so uneasily that, when they went to raise the anchor, the chain was worn through, and they lost it. And yet it fell calm again

at noon, and they were scarcely advanced a mile further. The coast was very low and sandy as far as they could see it, and the only sign of vegetation was a clump of mangrove trees, which lay close to the beach. This is not a pretty tree at any time, but with the temperature at 90° in the shade, the crew of the *Mermaid* soon got tired of contemplating it.

It was evident that the coast formed a deep gulf after getting out into the projection of North-west Cape, but the extent of it could not be even guessed at, as the land was so low. Towards evening, a south-west wind sprang up, and for fear of losing another anchor, they kept under easy sail. But as the coast was quite unknown, the night was passed in great anxiety, and when day broke they found themselves within a mile of a reef off the south-west part of an island, which lay to the north of the cape. Standing to the eastward, three sandy islets were discovered besides, and these seemed only the beginning of a crowd of small islands in advance of them, whose limits could not be seen from the mast-head. They were rather pretty in appearance, although they made the horizon appear like a very dreary coast, seen at its worst when just uncovered by a very low tide. They were round in shape, and not more than a quarter of a mile in diameter, and being low, and crowned with a bright green verdure, there was an agreeable contrast between their summits, the dark blue sea, the white glittering belt of sand, and the red cliffs of the dull monotonous mainland.

Whatever beauties the islands may have possessed, the whole locality was a most unfortunate one for King. On the 13th, he broke another anchor, and now was reduced to a small stream one, which would never hold the vessel in a gale. He returned to the gulf, however, to prosecute its examination, but the calms delayed him very much. What with calms and hot weather, this was a fearful coast. The heat was overpowering (97° in the shade), and as the vessel was not provided with an awning, the crew felt it extremely. On the 14th, they had proceeded twenty-five miles into the opening, without seeing anything of its termination. By the

next day, they descried some hills of peaked shape, to the southward, which looked like the end of the inlet. There were numerous low islands to the eastward, and the land behind seemed continuous; but the coast was too shallow to ascertain this, and the loss of their anchor was now very much felt. Before dark, they discovered an anchorage upon the west shore, which was so gratifying to King that he called it the Bay of Rest.

As soon as the vessel was secured, Mr. Bedwell landed on the eastern shore of the bay. He found it to be of bold approach, but lined with coral rocks and dead shells, among which was a *Buccinum* of immense size. The soil was extremely poor; in fact, it was a perfect desert of red sand, its best places appearing like brick dust. It was, of course, almost destitute of vegetation, with the exception of a few desert-like bushes, and the usual accompaniment of mangroves. And yet, barren and desolate as it was, the place was not without its interest. It was covered with immense ant-hills—those nests which have been already spoken of as looking at a distance like huts. Mr. Cunningham, the botanist, measured one here which was eight feet high, and nearly twenty-six feet in circumference. It was deserted by its constructors, and formed, instead, a safe asylum for insects and reptiles. These nests formed a picturesque foreground to a scene which, in wild desolation, could not be equalled on any other part of the coast, and, what made it still more characteristic, was the smoke and lurid glare rising in the distance, for the back country had been fired by the natives, and was now in flames.

Mr. Bedwell found a narrow opening at the bottom of the bay. It communicated with an inner basin of small extent. There is, however, probably, some other opening at the end of this gulf. It will be related, hereafter, how Mr. F. Gregory saw a fine river flowing in the direction of Exmouth Gulf; and unless the true opening were forgotten by Mr. Bedwell, there must be some other besides the one he saw.

From Exmouth Gulf, King directed his course to the eastward on the 18th. An immense number of islands

succeeded, amid which the mainland projected as a small cape, named Cape Locker. Twelve miles east of this the shore is lined with mangroves, among which a small opening, like a rivulet, tempted King to an examination in a small open boat. He had some difficulty in finding a channel, but when the boat was within the heads he found a regular depth of from ten to twelve feet. For the first two miles the banks were lined with an impenetrable hedge of mangroves, which bore marks of being frequently inundated. Beyond this the land was low and sandy. At high water they landed to examine the country. The only elevation they could find was a low sand hillock; which, low as it was, showed the character of the country. It was poor and arid, and evidently overflowed by the sea at very high tides. Two or three stunted trees were the only approach to vegetation, while the soil was composed of red sand, mud, and clay, of which the first formed by far the largest portion.

What made this dreary scene doubly oppressive to the explorers was the heat of the weather. The sun's hot rays seemed to make this mixture of salt marsh and desert almost red-hot, so that while King took bearings he was obliged to break off the mangrove branches and stand upon them. The inlet was called Curlew River, from the number of birds of that kind seen upon the mud flats, but the most abundant inhabitants of this coast were flies, which had not apparently diminished in the least since the time of Dampier.

During the absence of the boat, Mr. Bedwell walked a mile or so inland in the direction of one of the salt marshes. On his way he passed several ant-hills of the same description as those seen on the Bay of Rest. The coast is here protected from the inroads of the sea by a barrier of sand dunes, from ten to twenty feet high, on which were growing a great variety of plants. A species of convolvulus was very conspicuous among them, as it stretched along the sand for sometimes ninety feet, with a stem an inch in diameter. Behind the dunes the country was flat, in most parts even below the level of the sea, and probably inundated at times,

leaving the thick incrustation of salt by the evaporation of sea water in the hollows. The view was bounded, about five miles from the beach, by some rocky hills, which were not high, and appeared destitute of vegetation. The shores were lined by a barrier of steep rocks, whose principal shell-fish were a species of oyster, and a small black, winkle-like univalve, called the *Nerita*. No one could call a view over such country gratifying in any sense. Taking the sand-hills, the rocks, the steaming salt-plains, and the barren ranges together, it is perhaps the very worst of the worst part of this coast.

In the evening, after their return from the river, the weather was cloudy, but afterwards cleared up, with a southerly wind. It was a stifling, hot wind. From the listless sensations it caused, it strongly reminded King of the hot wind at Port Jackson. This seemed to afford additional ground for the hypothesis that the interior of the continent was a sandy desert like that which lay before them.

Passing now to the eastward, the same low line of coast and the same thick cluster of islands were discovered. The water was, as usual, very shallow; and the beach lined with a fringe of mangroves—a plant which seems to revel in low, unhealthy, marshy salt lands. Sometimes, the vessel could be brought near enough to enable King to see over the mangroves from the mast-head. Large sheets of water were then observed beyond the bushes, and beyond these salt water lakes, rocky hills bounded the view. The islands outside were innumerable, crowding in little dotted clusters far beyond the horizon; they were all, however, little more than mere sandy islets, either barren or covered with coarse vegetation. The coast was sometimes lost to view, as the cutter threaded in and out of this tangled archipelago. The only projection it possessed was named Cape Preston. There was no anchorage near it—at least, none but a very rocky one, and this could not well be trusted in their destitute condition; so they had to keep under sail all night. This was easily done, as there was always a land breeze

blowing off the shore; but it was an extremely dangerous course, because of the numerous islands and reefs. Nights passed thus were full of anxiety to Captain King.

Next morning, they anchored near a small sandy isle, in the centre of a bay, upon the shore. This day was calm and sultry; but the sky soon became black and clouded over the land to the south-east, assuming a very threatening appearance. Heavy, dense clouds rolled up, amid which vivid forked lightning flashed. King expected a severe squall, at the least; but just as it seemed on the point of breaking, the clouds cleared away and the sea breeze set in. This seems to be characteristic of the change from land to sea breezes upon tropical coasts. Lieutenant Jansen gives an account of a similar occurrence every day, at Java, which is not very different in its meteorology from north-west Australia, at the changes of the monsoons.

The next morning, Captain King landed upon the island, near which they were anchored, and climbed the summit of a rocky head before the sun rose. In the ascent he crossed several deep ravines, which, together with the hills, were covered with porcupine or spinifex grass (*Triodia viscida*), growing among heaps of rocks which lay scattered in all directions. The greater part of the surface of the island was covered with these stones; so that to reach the top of the hill was a matter of no small labour and difficulty. But the view repaid him, for it was very extensive. The coast to the eastward trended into a bay with low shores, while the most distant land visible was an island of another archipelago, lying before a coast which seemed to be high. King fancied at first that he was upon the very island upon which Dampier had landed; but he soon found out his mistake. This was certainly the part of the coast which that navigator had visited. Like King, he had gazed upon its dismal expanse of low, oozy shores, red sandstone rocks, and the puzzling labyrinth of islands; but his Rosemary Island lay further from the coast, and was soon after recognised by King.

On the north side of Rocky Head, some small water-

holes were found, and while the crew were making use of them, three natives were observed paddling across to one of the islands. An effort was made to intercept one of them, and with much difficulty he was brought on board. His canoe was found to be no more than a log of wood upon which he was seated; and it was his only riches. When he was placed upon the deck of the cutter, a great number of his companions showed themselves upon the beach, manifesting the most lively demonstrations of grief at the loss of their companion. He appeared as much grieved as they. Every effort to amuse and please him only increased his expression of terrified anxiety. He ate some sugar with relish, but called loudly to his companions from time to time. King fastened some presents round his neck and put him ashore. At first, his tribe pointed their spears at him, and refused to allow him to approach until he had answered their numerous interrogatories; they then sat round and listened to his story. The manner in which these savages appeared when their companion was taken, showed how they watched every movement of the explorers; and that, though none were visible upon the coast hitherto, there may have been, for all that, plenty about. They seemed a quiet, inoffensive people, less disposed to fight than their forefathers, one hundred and twenty years previously. Many other opportunities of communicating with them occurred, and this induced King to call this archipelago Intercourse Islands. Only one of the isles seemed to possess water in any quantity, and this was thickly inhabited. The natives would not allow them to land there, and though they did nothing but threaten with spears and stones, King was not desirous of destroying their friendly feeling so he did not press the point.

Until March the 4th, was occupied in the tedious work of mapping these islands and indicating the shoals and reefs around them. It is not necessary to reprint the vocabulary of names with which King adorned the most of them, which would comprise a list of his friends and acquaintances, and everybody that he delighted to honour. What concerns us to know is, that all the

islands were painfully alike in every respect; but most of all in the aridity of their desolate rocky surfaces. On the day just named, they anchored in Nickol Bay, called so at Mr. Roe's request. This was a good safe roadstead, and the land at the back seemed better. Far inland, some hills could be seen to the eastward; but the coast itself was so low, that at four miles it could not be seen from the deck. It was covered, as usual, with the everlasting mangroves; and yet it was not altogether without beauty. Although the sea water was shallow so as only to show the palest hue of green over the white silvery sand or the red mud, yet, as it plashed to and fro, it revealed beauties of marine life which made up for the want of symmetry elsewhere. There were the many-coloured corals, with all their grotesque varieties of delicate form: there were the sea-weeds waving to and fro in the tide, and reflecting matchless hues of scarlet and green; and there were the fishes and the sea-slugs unrivalled in colours and shapes, abounding; while, deeper down, the bottom could be seen covered with the pearl oyster.

Nickol Bay has become since famous as the base line of the discoveries of F. Gregory, in 1861. This lone, desolate looking coast fronted an interior country of great richness and fertility. It is as well to bear this in mind. Probably, many parts of the shore which have as unfavourable an exterior as this, may conceal an interior as fertile. Captain King little suspected that he was sailing past as rich a tract as Chichester Downs. While anchored at Nickol Bay, the *Mermaid* experienced another squall: this time, the sand was blown over them from the shore, although it was more than two miles away.

From Nickol Bay, King proceeded to survey certain reefs out in the open sea, which had been seen by vessels sailing between Java and the north-west coast. When this was finished, he sailed for Cape Arnhem; where, it will be remembered, Flinders' survey had formerly terminated. The season was favourable now for surveying westward from Carpentaria; and, to say the truth, King was heartily tired of the monotonous and arid character of the north-west coast.

But he did not commence quite so far to the east as Cape Arnhem. The first land he made was South-west Bay, a rocky indentation of the coast, between Points Guion and Turner, in the 134th meridian of east longitude: there he landed. It was now about the termination of the rainy season, and the vegetation was most luxuriant: the grass was six feet high, completely concealing the men from each other as they walked to the summit of a very thickly wooded hill. Above the grass, the *Pandanus* palm, the *Hibiscus*, and the Australian fig lifted their graceful heads; while the smaller trees were a dwarf *Eucalyptus*, intermingled with tropical plants and the long-stemmed convolvulus in full flower. The drooping *Casuarina* and the scarlet *Grevilla* were also found here; but the only fruit was a small black grape of inferior quality. And yet, for all this fertility, the soil was not exactly good. The centre of the bay forms a sandy beach terminated by curious cliffs about forty feet high; the upper part of red ferruginous clay, and the lower, of the whitest pipeclay, with a clear line of demarkation between them, which formed a very remarkable contrast. Ten miles inland was a rocky range, named the Wellington Range, about twenty-five miles in extent, with an irregular and rugged outline.

While making his survey, several signs of the visits of Malay fishermen were brought to King. They were principally old broken joints of bamboo and pieces of rope; but were evidently quite recent, so that the Malays themselves could not be far distant. King was rather uneasy about this: he had no means of defending himself, and the Malays might choose to be troublesome if he met them. He therefore ordered a careful watch to be kept. He had however more to fear from the natives than the Malays. In spite of precautions, the savages of this coast managed to steal all the tools of the wooding party, and when one of their canoes was taken by way of reprisal, they nearly succeeded in carrying off the whale-boat as indemnity. They seldom came close enough to be hostile; but they could be seen from the ship, either sneaking amid the tall grass, or crawling

on the ground behind the explorers, watching every turn, and never losing an opportunity of making off with property within their reach. Once, indeed, they made an attack upon a boat party by showering down stones from the cliff upon the men, and though a shot or two scared them, they were not very much frightened, owing to their intercourse with the Malays. Their dwellings were of sticks, supporting a roof of bark, and covered over with sand.

In leaving South-West Bay, Sim's Island, situate in front, was twice visited. It was a fertile sandstone island, well covered with tall grass. The latter was an obstacle to the explorers, because it was so high and thick; and as an alligator fifteen feet long had been seen swimming round the ship, the men were not at all anxious to penetrate the jungle. After leaving the bay, they anchored in an opening on the west side of North Island, of the Goulburn group, and commenced on the 6th cutting wood from a group of *Casuarinas* which grew close to the beach. The natives were very troublesome all the time, and the utmost precaution was necessary to avoid bloodshed. The bay was called Mullet Bay, in consequence of the abundance of a species of that fish. The trepang was also found in numbers about the rocks, and this explained why it was so much resorted to by the Malays.

On the 8th, they left Mullet Bay. The Goulburn group was formed, principally, by a northern and southern island, divided by an open channel; but the *Mermaid* could not sail between, owing to the strength of the current. In returning to South-West Bay, the crew were surprised by the sight of a Malay fleet steering through the strait. King was alarmed, and determined to proceed at once to the westward. Before he had time to do so, the fleet anchored off Sim's Island, and their crews were busily engaged in pushing to and from the shore, apparently getting water. As King passed, he hoisted the British ensign, which was replied to by a Dutch one; the chief's vessel displayed a blue flag in addition. Some chiefs upon the rocks, who appeared to take no part in the labours of the

others, made signals to King to anchor, but the latter was too defenceless to risk a conference, so he sailed on.

The evening was too far advanced to make any particular examination of the coast; but after passing Sim's Island, the coast was sufficiently near to perceive the general outline as far as Point Brogden, off which they were at sunset. The land now abutted on the shore in high cliffs crowned with thick wood. There was no longer the same monotony, nor the appearance of sterility; each bend of the coast showed not only a new aspect, but features of interest, and, what was better, luxuriant vegetation. The cliff continued up to Cape Cockburn, and then the land trended deeply in to the south-west. There was a bay on the western side of Cape Cockburn, which King was determined to examine; but just as he was hauling into it, the Malay fleet was seen standing towards them. Not liking to enter until they had passed, King made a tack off shore, but, to his great mortification, no sooner had they reached the Cape than they sailed into the bay and anchored.

As the land to the westward formed a deep bay, the *Mermaid* was steered on to examine it, whilst the anchorage was called Malay Bay. Passing through a strait, separating Annesley from Valentia Island, the vessel entered Mountnorris Bay. The coast was a succession of sandy beaches, interrupted by rocky headlands, while Valentia Island, though thickly wooded, was as monotonous as the mainland.

Next day, the Malays were observed making a move, and as each vessel got under weigh, it steered towards them. The anchor was raised, and the *Mermaid* made as ready for a fight as she could be. The number of the proas was now increased to twenty, and they had hoisted out six large canoes. King's alarm may be imagined; but there was nothing to fear. There was no appearance of any hostile intention as they approached; some of them steered across the bay, and only a few approached the cutter. One of the canoes came near, with the intention of visiting, but

King pointed to his carronade and motioned them off. They returned disappointed, but not displeased, and the cutter was left at liberty to examine the bay. Nothing worthy of note was found in it. Its shores were low, and its beaches rocky and so uninteresting that they returned at once to Mountnorris Bay.

Next day, he landed on Copeland Island, lying off the entrance of the bay. It was surrounded by a coral bank, and its north side formed by a perpendicular argillaceous cliff of a bright yellow colour. Behind the cliff the land gradually declined, running off to a low point. The island was covered with trees, amid which a beautiful acacia in full bloom was a very pleasing object. Another island, like it in nearly all respects, was found to the westward. This was Darch's Island. Both had very poor soil, but well grassed, and supporting a good many *Areca* and *Pandanus* palm trees, some of the former being forty feet high. The rocks were of the usual red sandstone, which gave the cliffs a very lurid appearance, and there were many traces of natives upon them.

Beyond these islands, another inlet trended in deeply, for the outline of the land was extremely uneven. In fact, they were now upon the commencement of the Coburg Peninsula, which is only united to the main by a strip of land, which divides Mountnorris Bay from Van Diemen's Gulf. The present inlet was named Raffles Bay. The shores were low, and so overrun with mangroves that landing in most parts was impracticable. A small break near a cliff enabled them to examine the country. Here two streams of fresh water were found; one of which ran over the beach with some force, but it appeared only temporary. The soil was very good; but the trees and underwood so thick that they could not get very far from the boat.

King left Raffles Bay on the 19th of April, and ran along the western shore to the north-west. He was now approaching a portion of the coast which has since been much better known, and is not connected in the minds of very old colonists with very

pleasant associations. This was Port Essington. Amid its sinuosities there was much good land, and much picturesque scenery, in comparison with what King had previously seen; but he, probably, overrated its real value, and when settlers came to live there it was not found to be a paradise.

The next point to the westward from Raffles Bay was Point Smith, and at the distance of a mile from it is a ledge of rocks on which the sea constantly breaks. At the bottom of an inlet near was some land higher than usual, and upon it two flat-topped hills. The eastern shore of the port was formed by a succession of rocky points, between which were ranges of red cliffs, much higher and more thickly wooded than any yet seen. They anchored the vessel under the cliffs near enough to get into the shade of the gloomy-wooded heights, and all night long the howlings of the native dogs could be distinctly heard. The next morning they landed at the mouth of a small salt-water inlet which wound in among the mangroves. There was a hill near, which King climbed. He could see the bottom of the bay which closed in to a narrow opening and then widened out to a spacious inner harbour. The scenery was not grand, but certainly interesting from its darkness and mystery—the still placid character of the water, the red cliffs jutting in and out, either upon deep water or green flats of mangroves, and the country behind thickly, nay, almost impenetrably clothed with timber. The ravines and gullies were nearly beyond number, either enclosing still salt-water fiords, or undulating with forest land, in which the *Acacia*, *Pandanus*, fern, and *Areca* palm were the principal vegetable ornament. The soil was chiefly of a grey sandy earth, rich in some parts, but these few and far between.

The *Mermaid* was steered into the narrow opening. A spacious sheet of water was found within, divided into two bays by a projecting cliffy point named Middle Head. The shores were thickly wooded, and separated from the water by mud flats, which at low water were very extensive. King remained at anchor three days

in this port, and the shores received a close examination from him. On the western entrance a wrecked canoe was found, and near it a spear, altogether different from any yet seen. It was headed with a sharp-pointed splinter of quartz, about four inches long, and an inch and a half broad. The shaft was of the mangrove tree, nearly eight feet long. The stone was fastened on with plaited grass, covered by a mass of gum. At the bottom of the western basin was the skeleton of a human body, but it was not ascertained whether it was the body of a native or not. The only thing which makes the discovery curious is the fact, that the natives are very careful to bury or burn their dead, and this must have been left exposed for some other reason. The traces of natives were found everywhere, but they did not show themselves. Some trees appeared to have been cut with iron instruments, but these might have been obtained from the Malays.

Upon leaving the inner harbour, they anchored in Knocker's Bay, on the west side of the port, and in the afternoon set off to examine an opening in the mangroves at the bottom of it. After pulling all through its various windings for about a mile, where it was scarcely broad enough for the boat to pass, its further investigation was given up, and the boat's crew commenced to return. But the mangroves were so thick, and formed so impervious a network, that they had great difficulty in effecting it. When about half-way towards the mouth, they found the boat impeded by the roots of a mangrove bush, and whilst the men were clearing the rudder, they were suddenly startled by a loud yell from a bush not ten yards from them. No sooner had the yell been uttered, than a large number of natives leaped into the water. They were armed with spears and clubs, and advanced, shaking their weapons, making hideous grimaces, and yelling like demons. The position of the boat was rather alarming, for it was completely entangled, and the river was too narrow to permit the oars being used. Two muskets, loaded with ball and a charge of small shot, were fired over the blacks' heads. The savages required nothing

more. They turned precipitately, and fled into the bushes so quickly that the place at once was as silent and still as it had been before. But they were not completely done with the natives. As they proceeded down the rivulet, their black forms were observed through the bushes hastening towards a low part of the stream which the boat was obliged to pass before it could reach the bay. The sailors were prepared this time. In due time a volley of stones and spears from the bushes assailed the boat, which was answered by a volley of musketry. After that no more of the natives was seen.

Early on the 25th April, the *Mermaid* sailed out of Port Essington; and passing round its western head, named after Admiral Vashon, hauled into a bay. Here there was a large Malay encampment, and several proas at anchor. The bay, in any case, did not offer any inducement for an examination, and King was still very much frightened of the Malays, so he passed on to the next bay. This was about four miles deep and two broad. The coast appeared to take a decided turn to the southward, and as some land was observed on the western horizon, it was concluded that the ship was in the entrance of the great bay of Van Diemen, which King was especially instructed to examine. Two flat-topped hills, already spoken of, formed conspicuous objects inland, and King named them Mounts Bedwell and Roe, after his two officers. They have since become familiar objects in connection with the settlement as Port Essington.

Another division of the Malay encampment was here noticed; but as there were only four proas, King communicated with them. They seemed peaceable people, who were very much surprised at everything they saw; but no information was obtained from them. Some days more were occupied in surveying the shores of the deep Gulf of Van Diemen. It was soon discovered, as before observed, that Mountnorris Bay was only separated from the gulf by a narrow strip of land, and that Port Essington was upon a peninsula. The whole of the land about here was highly spoken of by King. It

was very thickly clothed with timber, which, though small, showed by its luxuriance a very rich soil. There appeared, also, to be abundant supplies of water, though King was not able to see much, for the thick vegetation rendered it impossible to go very far inland. The gulf had been partly explored by the Dutch, who had entered it, but did not go to its end. It was very shallow, and occupied by numerous small islands, to which various names were given by King.

In steering towards the bottom of the gulf, a considerable opening was found, which promised to lead some distance into the interior. It was the evening of the 5th May that it was reached; and, as the greater part of the tide was expended, they anchored the cutter at the entrance. This was like all Australian rivers, fronted by a bar, upon which there was only twelve feet of water. The depth increased as they entered to thirty feet, and, as they proceeded, reached as much as fifty feet. The banks on either side of the river were very low, and composed of soft mud. In fact, this was a mere delta, so thickly clothed with mangroves that any attempt to land for the first eight or ten miles was quite useless.

All these facts were ascertained by the boats, which were despatched on the 6th to examine the stream. Where they landed the banks were about two hundred yards apart, but very low. There was not a hillock to ascend nor a tree to climb, so that the character of the interior could only be guessed; but a guess made where the eye stretched over a boundless plain clothed with rushy grass could not be far wrong. A small conical hill peeped up here and there like a misty cloud in the distance, but all the rest was dreary, low, and flat. The mangrove bushes were quite a relief. These were crowded with egrets' nests, besides hawks, pelicans, ducks, and pigeons. Clouds of cockatoos disturbed the echoes of the salt-water river with their hideous screechings, but, for all these signs of life, there was a lurid air of scorching aridity about the whole scene, which the columns of smoke from distant native fires tended

much to increase. The boats returned without having seen the end of the opening.

The next morning the cutter was under weigh, and coasting westward towards a low but extensive island. As they approached, they found that it fronted a very considerable opening in the land, extending into the interior, under the eastern base of a mountain, named Mount Hooper. They passed easily between the island and the mainland, and entered an opening similar in appearance to that examined the day before, but so much more considerable that they had great hopes of its proving a very important stream. It should be mentioned that there were other islands off this entrance, the principal of which were called Barrow and Field Islands.

As the cutter approached the opening, the depth shoaled so gradually that she was able to run up six miles. She was anchored about noon, and some of the crew attempted to land upon the eastern bank. This was not an easy task, because the shores were very muddy. Nothing was done, except merely to land; they were too fatigued to examine the country. They returned to the vessel, and brought her, at high water, to the end of the first reach. Preparations were then made for a boat excursion to explore this fine river.

At daybreak next morning Captain King set out. The stream had been examined now for thirty-six miles, and hitherto it had differed from the other only in being of larger size. From the anchorage the channel deepened from eight to five fathoms, and this depth continued pretty evenly for about nine miles; it then began to decrease, and, at the furthest part reached, was only fifteen feet at high water. The banks were thickly clothed with mangroves, as usual; they were of soft mud, and scarcely three feet high. The country on all sides was low and level; but still the view was somewhat varied. Little wooded hills were visible at intervals, and here and there a cluster of palm trees made the open plain less monotonous; but the land lay under the disadvantage of having been recently burnt, and its bare surface, with blackened ashes, did not look very

agreeable in such a climate and under such a sun. The whole country seemed liable at times to inundation from the river, and what was not burned was covered with a thick and matted broom grass. The explorers saw very few birds, and these principally cockatoos. But the abundance of alligators in both rivers was a matter of anything but agreeable surprise: hence the name of the Alligator Rivers, East and South, was bestowed upon them. The water in the South Alligator River was fresh in its upper part.

Field Island, at the entrance, was low and thickly wooded. To the westward was another opening, which was not examined. The land upon the shore was very low and scarcely distinct, but it appeared to be sandy. On the 12th May, they passed a considerable opening, or, as it was thought to be, a bight, for many patches of land were observed upon the horizon. The wind was too fresh from the eastward to enable King to run into it, so he steered for some land to the northward. This was an island. As a matter of course, it was called Melville Island—making about the sixth or seventh island of that name, by which our maps are confused.

At midnight, the cutter, drifted by the tide, passed close to the easternmost part of the island. It appeared, as they passed along its coast, to be a picturesque and fertile piece of land. The lower country was green and luxuriant, and the hills were thickly wooded. Many natives were seen about, which was another sign of the richness and fertility of the soil. Far out of the bays, the cliffs were half red and half white, like those at Goulburn Islands, and, in many respects, the formations appeared the same. On the 17th, they passed round Cape Van Diemen, and in the evening anchored off a table-shaped hill, that formed the south end of a sandy bay. It was dark when they anchored, and the next morning they found they were in the mouth of a very considerable river-like opening, which made them think that they had made a very important discovery at last. As yet, be it remembered, they did not know that Melville Island was separated from the mainland. This inlet was the strait; but no

suspicion of the fact crossed King's mind. The inlet was, therefore, considered the mouth of a river, and the indentation was called St. Asaph's Bay. The table-shaped hill near the anchorage was named Luxmore Head. King landed, and ascended its summit, but this was so thickly wooded that he could see nothing of the country around. There were small openings in the trees, through which a few distant objects could be distinguished. It was thought that the bearings of these could be taken; and just as the theodolite-stand was fixed, and the party were amusing themselves rambling about, the natives showed in force unpleasantly near. So sudden was their appearance, and so formidable did they seem in their array of spears, white paint, and shaking boomerangs, that the boat's crew were rather panic-stricken; and before they had time to deliberate, found themselves hurrying down to the boat as fast as their legs could carry them. It was a regular *sauve qui peut*, and in the hurry the theodolite-stand and some other articles were left behind. These were seized by the savages as lawful prize. The stand may have puzzled them, and its ultimate utility to any but the owner may have been questioned; but it was carried off in triumph. Captain King tried the effect of a parley, but it had no effect. The natives seemed to know their advantage, and the proverb, *melior est conditio possidentis*. They were willing to treat on any other basis, and magnanimously exchanged a dead bird for a silk handkerchief; but they made a stand when the stolen property was required. They repeatedly asked for axes, by imitating the action of chopping, but in other respects their demonstrations were rather hostile. Whenever the party tried to land again, they shouted and howled, and mustered in great force to oppose them. A great deal of time was lost in trying to get the stand back; axes and chisels were freely given, but at first they did not understand, and only gave baskets and the fruit of the sago palm in exchange. When they were made to comprehend what was wanted, they took up the article in request and examined it carefully. A consultation was held; and after dis-

cussing the merits of its brass screws and mountings, they deliberately refused to return it, and retreated to the woods.

The opening through which they now sailed delighted the explorers with its beauty. The sides were steep and inaccessible, even to the water's edge, and whenever a clear space among the mangroves was seen, the sago palm and the pandanus mingled their leafy ornaments with the tropical flora. On the 19th, the opening had become so contracted that the boat was hoisted out. After proceeding two miles further, the channel took a more easterly course. Speculations ran high as to its continuance. The probability of its being a large river appeared to their sanguine minds so certain that they never doubted it to be otherwise, when suddenly the open sea appeared. The strait was impassable at its lower part in consequence of the shoals, so that after seeing the ocean, and enjoying the luxury of such a disappointment, they had to retrace their course back to St. Asaph's Bay. The strait was named Apsley, and the land cut off by it Bathurst Island.

The day following, they coasted along the north-west side of Bathurst Island, and the day but one after that, anchored off another opening at the bottom of an extensive bay. It happened to be high water when they anchored; and so shallow was this coast, that though they were three miles from the shore, the ebb tide reduced the depth as much as to make them apprehend that the cutter would be left dry. The depth, finally, was only eighteen inches over the cutter's draught.

The opening was found between two low sandy points. It trended in to the south-east, and towards a flat-topped hill in the distance. In sounding the space between the anchorage and the shore, it was found that they were on the outer edge of a bar, within which the water was deep enough. The cutter was, therefore, worked up towards the opening. She passed the bar easily, and an anchorage was taken up in the evening within the entrance. They could only take the ship a mile further, and then the examination was conducted in a boat.

It was found to run on, gradually narrowing and decreasing in depth, for eight miles, and to terminate in two salt-water creeks. The banks had the usual impenetrable mangrove lining, amid which several creeks ran, connecting the low interior with the stream. The boat's crew returned to the cutter at night, and next day shifted the berth to an anchorage close to the shore, on the north side, for the purpose of wooding. So close to the water's edge did the timber grow, that a supply was easily obtained. While they were loading the boat, they were jealously watched by the natives, who appeared planning some surprise amid the bushes, where they lay, as they thought, concealed. A little before dark they were observed to creep out; but a musket fired over their heads made them desist from their intentions, whatever they were.

Next day, as the cutter sailed by a point, the savages rushed suddenly out into the shallow sea, within thirty yards of it, and made the explorers signs as if pressing them to return and land. They seemed anxious to get axes and chisels, and were dreadfully disappointed on seeing that no attention was paid to their signs. Port Hurd and Gordon Bay were the names given to those harbours. From Gordon Bay the coast trends to the southward, forming cliffs of dark-red sandstone. Small islands lay off them, but in other respects these shores presented little of interest.

The time had now arrived for leaving the coast, and giving up any further explorations on this voyage. Not only was the favourable season drawing to a close, but the provisions had nearly run out, and the water had almost completely failed. This latter was a misfortune not calculated upon. Several of the casks had leaked, and it was absolutely necessary to replenish them at Timor, before even the return voyage could be ventured upon. King accordingly left the coast; he obtained water at Timor, and then returned to that portion of the coast laid down by Baudin, to the southward of the Montebello Islands. It proved to be an island, as the great part of that navigator's mainland

turned out to be. This was the last discovery made by King on the first voyage. He now sailed direct for Port Jackson, where, with some trifling delays from calms, he arrived on the 28th July, 1818.

The proceedings of the survey were encouraging, but as yet bore but a small proportion to what was still to be discovered. Two important questions had been set at rest; and these were the openings behind Rosemary Island, and the nature of Van Diemen's Gulf. The loss of the anchors prevented a complete examination of Exmouth Gulf, and landing upon Depuch Island, of which M. Peron had given such favourable accounts. On the north coast they had found several rivers, one of which was ascended for forty miles. Besides this, many deep bays and excellent ports had been discovered, in addition to the knowledge obtained of North Australia, with regard to its agricultural or pastoral character. "Its thickly wooded shores," says King, "bore a striking contrast to the sandy desert-looking tract we had previously seen, and inspired us with the hope of finding at some future time a still greater improvement of country between the two extremes."

CHAPTER XII.

KING'S SECOND VOYAGE.

Macquarrie Harbour and Port Macquarrie—Endeavour River—Across Carpentaria—Wessel's Islands—Castlereagh Bay—Liverpool River—Paterson Bay—Point Pearce—Cambridge Gulf—Cape Londonderry—Vansittart Bay—Cape Voltaire—Admiralty Gulf.

When King returned, he was employed in surveying the recently discovered Macquarrie Harbour in Tasmania, and then subsequently he mapped Port Macquarrie and the river Hastings, which had been discovered, as it will be remembered, by Lieutenant Oxley, on his second journey. It was not until May, 1819, that the *Mermaid* was able to sail again for the north coast; and this time it was intended to accomplish much more, by taking provisions for a longer voyage. The course was not round the west coast, as in the commencement of the last expedition. King determined, on the contrary, to proceed at once to the part last surveyed by Flinders. He would thus sail by the east coast, through Torres Straits, and across Carpentaria to the English Company's Islands.

On the way to Torres Straits, he entered a previously unknown inlet, near Port Curtis; this was Rodd's Bay; and on the 14th June he landed near Cape Cleveland to procure wood and water. The coast land here is low, and occupied by a large body of water, beyond which stretched a range of flat-topped hills, rocky and precipitous—so much so, indeed, as to be apparently inaccessible.

The land seen after this was simply the same as that described by Cook. Nothing new was discovered, except one or two small islands. On the 27th, they anchored their vessel on the very spot where Captain Cook had repaired his, forty-nine years previously.

While some arrangements were being made, King went with a party to explore the stream. He found it to be generally very shallow, yet containing fresh water at about nine or ten miles from the mouth. But it was not fit, in any sense, for navigation; for at the place where the party turned back it was only six yards wide. On their return they examined another, on the north side, which proved inconsiderable. The country around was granitic; and from the abrupt and primitive appearance of Cape Tribulation, and the hills to the north, they were evidently of the same formation—at least, such was King's opinion; but as the only surface stone seen about was a quartzose sandstone, the rocks of the range did not differ from the rest of it further south.

Towards the end of July, King passed through Torres Straits. By a singular fatality, he lost two of his anchors in trying to stop at various places; and he was now preparing for the second portion of his exploration in the same destitute condition in which he began the first. He had been eleven weeks absent from Port Jackson, and the weather had been very wet and disagreeable since leaving Cape Grafton, which had not only increased the danger of navigation, but also considerably retarded his progress. The same cause had also entailed a considerable amount of sickness; and this prevented any observations of importance until Wessel's Islands were reached on the 27th. This was Flinders's furthest point, and therefore the exploration of King commenced here. The temperature had now become warm and genial, which soon restored all the invalids, and they entered upon their investigations with renewed vigour and enthusiasm.

The eastern side of Wessel's Island presents a level aspect; only a few shrubby trees appear at intervals to break the uniformity of its gently undulating surface. The point which is named Cape Wessel is the extremity of the northernmost island. Six natives were observed sitting upon the cliffs overhanging the cape, and two more walking on the beach; but they took no notice of the ship. The islands are not wide; for as the *Mermaid* sailed down the western side, the opposite cliffs

could be seen sometimes not more than half a mile distant. A few days were passed in examining these islands and others near them, besides Castlereagh Bay and the Crocodile Islands, marked in the old Dutch charts. This occupied until the 4th August. It was a time of very deep anxiety to King. With only one anchor, he was obliged to be most careful in seeking a harbour; and even then, if the shelter was not good, he had to weigh in the middle of the night, and trust to chance breezes or currents to carry him past the shoals and reefs which surrounded him.

On the date just named, the course was held towards a point of land which proved to be the eastern head of a deep opening. The remainder of the day was spent in making preparations for the examination of the river. On the following morning, he commenced its exploration in a boat. The banks on either side were even more thickly lined with mangroves than any yet seen, and this for a much greater distance, for they had rowed twelve miles before they were able to land. The sides at this distance were occasionally pretty clear of timber, and the back country could be seen. It wore anything but an encouraging aspect. As they advanced, some natives were perceived; and where the boat party stopped to dinner, the discharge of a gun brought about thirty natives round them, who commenced yelling, and shouting, and threatening hostilities with their spears. King ordered his party to embark; but the natives followed some distance along the banks, with angry cries and violent gesticulations; then they disappeared amid the long grass.

At sunset, King found he was rid of his troublesome neighbours; and having reached a favourable spot, where no alligators were visible, he pitched his tent. His party had no sooner composed themselves to rest than they were disturbed by loud shouts, which sent every man to his weapons. The shouts continued, and their terrors increased; and when about half the night had been spent in terrible anxiety, they made the discovery that the sounds were not made by natives, but birds, whose harsh cries were somewhat magnified by the fears of the listeners. One would think that

they could sleep tranquilly after this; but not a bit. When the birds left off, the mosquitoes began, and it was found quite impossible to escape these tormentors without lying so close to the fire that sleep was out of the question. Exhausted and out of spirits, it is no wonder that they only went five miles up the river next day. At this place the channel was scarcely twenty yards wide, and nearly dry at low water.

This river was named the Liverpool. It runs up about forty miles in a very serpentine way from a well-formed port. Its entrance is four miles wide, and at ten miles inland half a mile, but the water is not fresh except at about fourteen miles from the mouth. Fish were plentiful, as well as the birds which were noticed at Alligator River. In one respect they agreed wonderfully with that stream. It swarmed with alligators; and King says, if he had known the dangers of his encampment, the torment of the mosquitoes would have seemed as nothing in comparison with the presence of such animals.

On the 7th, they left the river and proceeded to the westward, round Point Hawkesbury. The land falls back, first in a south-east, and then in a north-west direction, until it becomes lost to view behind a point which looked like an island, but which was discovered to be the place where the second part of the last voyage commenced. The bay thus formed was called Junction Bay. It was not examined, and did not seem likely to be of much interest: so King proceeded on to South-West Bay to get a fresh supply of water from the well dug the year before. While the casks were being filled under the cliffs, the natives suddenly appeared, and showered down stones upon the men. One discharge of musketry terminated an engagement in which neither side was hurt, and the savages were not seen afterwards.

From South-West Bay, King sailed to Vernon's Islands, to take up the survey where it was left the year previously. On the 28th August, the islands were in sight. The delay in coming so short a distance was owing to light and baffling winds, but they had been

useful in one respect, as they had enabled King to correct many portions of his former charts.

The land near Vernon's Islands is low, but still terminating on the coast in slightly elevated cliffs. These are of a dark red colour. On their summits the deep green foliage stretches back into the interior, like a baize cloth, too thick and impenetrable to afford any view of the nature of the soil. The timber was not large, but it was abundant. Altogether, the aspect of the land was verdant and picturesque, solitary as usual, and looking anything but easy to explore. An opening was observed in the cliffs, but King did not examine it. At the bottom of it there was a flat-topped hill, as indeed all the hills about this part of the sandstone tableland may be considered, though some of them may have weathered more quickly into peaks. The western side of the inlet looked like an island, but it formed the head of another inlet, called Paterson Bay. The western part of this bay became low and rocky, and then the beach seemed arid and sandy again. It was so low as to be almost invisible from the deck of the cutter; and was so arid that, were it not for a few bushes or mangrove trees scattered about the beach, it might have been called a desert. And yet a desert it was not, for natives were seen. Like all their brethren, they gazed in listless apathy upon the ship, while the smoke of signal fires conveyed the intelligence of the visit of strangers to the tribes around.

The shore soon became cliffy and thickly wooded again. Like all the north coast, there were very many islands lying off it, which had been almost all mistaken for the mainland by Captain Baudin. Between Capes Ford and Dombey, the coast was found to be higher than usual; and was thickly wooded to the verge of the cliffs, which were still of the same dark red colour. Before them there was always a line of sandy beach. This panorama of cliffs, and trees, and beach, did not vary much, and, therefore, no knowledge of the interior could be obtained. Of course, a great deal was done in surveying islands, correcting charts, and altering the position of shoals and reefs upon the maps, but with

these details the reader need not be troubled. They only landed once. This was at Port Keats, into which Mr. Roe took the boat on the 7th September. The shores were found to be overrun with mangroves, and the back lands were evidently at times inundated with water. The bottom of the port divided into two salt-water arms, extending towards the foot of a range of thickly wooded hills, which were seen from the anchorage over the low mangrove shore.

The boat party had found only one landing place, and they walked a mile inland from it. The country was low and sterile. The only soil was a tenacious clay, with small ironstone gravel thickly mixed, with here and there a stunted *Eucalyptus* about six feet high; only adding to the desolation by its dwarfed and withered appearance.

On the 10th, Point Pearce was passed, and beyond it the shore trended in so as to form a very deep indenture. No land at all was visible at the bottom to the southward. King was rather anxious to examine this opening. He concluded very justly that it would be found to contain an important river, but it was not permitted to him to explore it. After putting backwards and forwards until the 12th, amid baffling winds and fogs, he could not risk entering with only one anchor, so he sailed away to continue his survey to the westward. Thus was the discovery of the Victoria River left to Stokes and Wickham.

On the 13th, the *Mermaid* was anchored under Lacrosse Island. This was named by Baudin. It was one of the usual sandstone islets, with cliffs of the dark red rock, and immense numbers of boulders of the same, scattered all about the surface. King landed upon it to search for water. He examined several gullies worn down by surface drainage, but could find not a trace of the former streams. He then ascended the hill, but the same arid appearance seemed to pervade the view upon every side. The heat all this time was overpowering. It was painful even to walk rapidly along the rocks which were exposed to the glare of the sunlight, so that all the water must have been dried up long ago. And

yet natives lived upon the island, and what was more singular, they walked about naked, and placed their bare feet upon rocks which seemed scorching to the white man's touch.

The gulf of Victoria River is divided into two halves, and King determined to examine the western arm which lay before him. He entered it on the 18th, and the tide swept him along with great rapidity. Towards evening he began to look for an anchorage, but this was not easy to find, for the tide was rapid and the water very deep. At last the anchor was dropped close to the south-west shore of Adolphus Island, which subdivided the gulf in which they were into two arms. The noise made by the cable in running out put to flight an immense number of bats which were resting in the mangrove bushes. They flew round and round the mast of the cutter in such numbers that they darkened the air. With the exception of these strange visitors, the coast appeared very lonely, and the only noises which broke the stillness of the cliffs were the echoes which stole across the smooth heaving water from the ship.

The explorers landed next morning. They climbed a high, steep, and rugged hill, close to the anchorge, which cost them much pains and labour to ascend. The view amply repaid their toil. They saw the south end of the island, as a low flat swamp surrounded by mangroves. Along the main there was a hill (Shakespeare Hill), and behind it a range which extended in a broken line to a mountain named Mount Connexion. The principal stream of the gulf was the west one, and three and a half miles further on it opened into a large basin of water. This contracted near some high hills, and further it was lost to view by winding among elevations of the ground.

Of course, King thought he had made a great discovery. It would have been very difficult to persuade him then that this gulf did not terminate in a river of any kind. But this was the case. Cambridge Gulf, for such it was named, is, in all Australia, one of the most barren and useless inlets, and what makes this character so peculiarly disappointing is, that from its

aspect, even seen on the map, one would certainly imagine that it is the embouchure of a large river. The soil is sandy and salt, the rocks are glaring red sandstone. The water is undrinkable, and the vegetation of the poorest kind. What with the salt on the plains, and the briny water, the red colour of the rocks, the heat of the climate, and the dreary character of the mud flats, it is one of most fiery, scorching specimens of an Australian wilderness which has yet been found.

But Mount Adolphus was not so bad. Grass was found springing up with great luxuriance in parts, and the gullies were at times channels for a large body of fresh water. Altogether, Captain King reported favourably of the island, often having rowed round it: but then his opinion may have been tinged with his pleasant anticipations of what he was going to find in Cambridge Gulf.

On the 22nd, the wind and tide were unfavourable for entering the opening, so King went to View Hill again, to feast his eyes with the prospect of the gulf. The country at the bottom appeared to be of rugged and mountainous appearance, and the hills rose abruptly in detached ranges from a low level plain extending to the shore, fringed by the everlasting mangrove shrubbery. These plains King said were not only covered with salt incrustations, but also with stems and branches of trees, and he thought in the simplicity of his heart that this must be the drift-wood brought down by the river. He even remarked on the large size of their trunks, as indicating the superior size of the trees of the interior from whence the river flowed.

The day following, the cutter was steered through the narrows, with a depth of forty-five fathoms in the channel. On entering the basin they found the country very arid and heavy. On the 24th, they reached the further end of the basin. The gulf had now assumed the character of a river, and, at the end of three or four miles, disappeared to the south-west under some hills. In the evening the people were allowed to bathe. Just as they came on board again, an alligator swam past the ship. This certainly was a check on any future ablu-

tions, but it encouraged King's idea, that he was approaching fresh water.

At daylight next morning they were again under weigh. As they proceeded, the channel became more and more contracted, and wound through a narrow strait, between high precipitous hills, too narrow at last for the cutter to proceed. They anchored, therefore, about two miles from the low west bank, and Captain King continued his examination in the whaleboat. The passage proved about two and a half miles long, very deep, and lined by steep hills. At the south end of it appeared another basin, opening out from the channel like the former. It was surrounded by low land, and, of course, mangroves, and studded with several islets, which were covered by every tide. The course of the inlet was still south-west.

They rowed across this second basin, still full of expectation, but with not much hope left. At the further side the channel contracted to a width of one hundred and fifty yards, and trended by a winding course to the south-east. They were now sixty miles from the sea, and the water was as salt as ever. It was very clear, therefore, that this was not a river. King was by this time thoroughly disheartened, and he determined to go no further. He stopped at high water, and landed on the bank to examine the country.

They were resting in a remarkable place. The scenery was not picturesque, but it had a grandeur of its own, amid its aridity. About three miles from the party was the base of a very remarkable quadrangular mass of hills. They rose abruptly from the salt-incrusted plain in steep slopes, which terminated in cliffs and precipices, or rocky escarpments, over the grassy incline. The cliff protruded at times so as to resemble the ramparts of a fortress, with bastions and counterscarps; and King thought that it only wanted a flag at the summit to make the appearance complete. Of course, this was a piece of the usual sandstone tableland, and its shape is one of the many varieties of form which these monuments of former denudation assume as they slowly weather in the atmosphere. It was named Mount Cockburn.

All around the country appeared most desolate: the grass, which was quite dry, wanted but a spark to set the whole country in flames, and the country required but such an addition to make its lurid appearance complete. The soil was a stiff clay, covered with salt; and the only traces of life in this lonely land were the footsteps of some native dogs, and the watch-fires of the savages in the distance. There was no inducement to remain in such a place, and King turned his back upon it as upon a locality on which the curse of God had fallen.

From Cambridge Gulf, King passed along the coast to Cape Londonderry, pausing and mapping as he went the uninteresting coast which intervenes. The French expedition had seen but little of the coast which King was about to explore, and he therefore anticipated that it would prove the most interesting part of his voyage. Beyond Cape Londonderry the land is very low, and defended by an extensive reef. There were a great number of small islands off the shore, which received various names, but they need not delay us as long as they did Captain King.

On the 1st of October, they anchored off the entrance of a considerable bight or bay, which was almost blocked up by a reef of rocks. It was doubtful whether they would be able to penetrate into it, without going round the Eclipse Islands, which had been so named in consequence of an eclipse of the moon, which had happened while the *Mermaid* was anchored near them. The next morning was therefore passed in examining the reefs to the southward. Captain King ascended a steep hill, which rose abruptly from the shore; the view, however, did not answer his expectation. A low country, of arid and barren appearance, extended to the southward, while the north part of the land was a peninsula, which Baudin had called Bourgainville Island. This view was taken from the south-west end of Long Island, an islet like so many which have been described before. It is of a rugged character, formed principally of large water-worn masses of quartzose sandstone, lying on a basis of the same rock. Traces of natives

were numerous on this island and the main. Upon the latter were also many beds of fresh-water streams, none of which they examined. On the beach of one of the sandy bays there were marks of a very large encampment, and this caused King to be very cautious in looking out against any surprise, and preparing for it.

The shores and hills were thickly scattered over with large masses of dark red rock, generally covered with a quartz incrustration, not crystallized, apparently. Everything bore the most parched and arid appearance, and, though the country was seen at an unfavourable season, the stunted character of the trees showed how poor was the soil. Yet the hills were thickly wooded, and numerous kangaroo tracks were observed in all directions. There was also a kind of vine found very plentifully among the trees, and its climbing habit made it a very considerable obstacle in penetrating the woods.

The examination of the bay to the south of Eclipse Islands took up the time until the 8th October. The scenery, in consequence of its rocky and rugged character, with the luxuriance of the vegetation, was interesting, and even beautiful. The bay was more a cliffy inlet, and the dark colour of the rocks, the smoothness of the water, the thick black shadow of the forest, whose stillness was only broken by the noise of the oars, gave a very different impression from any yet received from the Australian coast. As the boat went down the west side of the bay, a family of natives was discovered. The women ran away with their provisions, while the men took their spears. King, not wishing to alarm them, pulled across to the opposite shore, and landed. He and Mr. Cunningham ascended a steep hill, which showed an arid land around, and nothing more. Very foolishly, they had mounted this hill without bringing their arms; and as they descended the natives made an attempt to cut off their retreat. By making a bold front, the explorers managed to reach their boat in safety; but they were not quite done with the savages. In rowing past a point less wooded than usual, Mr. Cunningham wished to land to collect some plants. Before he could do so

the natives rushed out from a bush near, and commenced throwing stones at the boat, besides brandishing their spears. A musket fired over their heads had the effect of effectually dispersing them this time, and they were not seen afterwards.

This bay was called Vansittart Bay. On leaving it, King sailed westward, passing three inlets, about two miles deep and one broad. Another extensive gulf was found on the 10th, which was examined in the whale-boat. It was found to terminate in two inlets, winding under either side of a range of steep rocky hills, which were thickly clothed with stunted trees. Both arms were explored. They were shallow inlets of little importance. The whole bay was named Port Warrender, and formed one of the most promising harbours found upon this part of the coast. Its extent was very considerable; and though the land around was rugged and rocky, and the soil shallow, the hills on the western side were thickly covered with grass and trees. In the gullies the latter grew very luxuriantly, with all the splendour of a tropical flora. The verdure of these places made it rather disappointing to find that they were utterly destitute of water. On the eastern side of the port the land was much broken, and fronted by a number of small islands.

On the 13th, they left Port Warrender, and at sunset anchored off Point Pickering, so named after a friend of King. A bay trended to the westward of the point, and it was called Walmesley Bay; beyond this was an archipelago of islands. The space between Cape Bourgainville and the islands was called Admiralty Gulf, and the islands off Cape Voltaire had already been very partially examined by Baudin.

At this point, King resolved to leave the coast again for a while. His stock of fresh water was running short, but it was not alone on that account, as the water might be replenished at some part of the sandstone coast further on; but the men were sickening rapidly for want of fresh provisions, and unless something were done to relieve them, he would have to return to Sydney. Accordingly, he left the survey on the 21st,

and sailed for Timor, breaking off his survey in long. 125° 41′ 22″.

From Timor, King sailed to Port Jackson, with the intention, of course, of proceeding with his explorations as soon as possible. His course was much impeded by baffling winds, so that, though he sailed from Coepang on the 9th November, he did not reach Sydney until the 12th January, 1820.

The result of the proceedings during this voyage had been the exploration of five hundred and forty miles of northern coast, in addition to the five hundred which were previously examined; besides which a survey had been made of a passage inside the reefs to Torres Straits. It was not intended that King should make a detailed survey of this extensive tract of coast, and he did not, consequently, examine in a detailed way the bottom of every opening or bay that presented itself. What was known of the inlets, therefore, was not to be considered decisive of their importance. This should be specially borne in mind, because parts of the coast examined by King have not been since explored.

At Coepang, King learned from the Secretary of the Government that Captain De Freycenet, with the French corvette *St. Marie*, had just visited Timor. She had been fitted out at Toulon for a voyage round the world, and was expected to touch on the western shores of Australia; but she only called at Sharks Bay, and remained no longer than was necessary for astronomical and pendulum observations.

CHAPTER XIII.

KING'S THIRD VOYAGE.

Resumption of the survey—Montagu Sound—York Sound—Prince Frederick's Harbour—Roe's River—Coronation Islands—Port Nelson—Careening Bay—Brunswick Bay—Prince Regent's River—Mounts Trafalgar and Waterloo—The *Mermaid* springs a leak and returns.

KING refitted his vessel with the utmost despatch, which he was enabled to do all the more quickly as a vessel had just arrived from England with stores. Better prepared for sea than ever, and this time with the additional luxury of a surgeon on board, the *Mermaid* sailed again on the 14th June, 1820. On this voyage she went round the east side of the coast.

On the 20th, they anchored on the south side of Cape Bowen, in the entrance of the inlet which extends southward within the projection of Cape Clinton. In doing this, the tide swept them on to a sandbank, and the cutter received very serious damage. While she was on the bank she was continually striking, and at one time they heard a loud crash, which told of some serious damage, as it was then thought to the rudder or stern-post, but as no leak followed, King considered the injury trifling. In this he was much deceived; the damage was very serious, and had its extent been known at the time, it would have been advisable to return at once to Sydney.

From Cape Clinton, King proceeded through Torres Straits across the Gulf of Carpentaria, and on the 3rd September he anchored a few miles south of Cape Voltaire—the part of the coast he had left on his last voyage. The first observation was that, within sight of the vessel, no less than twenty-three islands could be counted; and

of that number every one was rocky, barren, and uninteresting. A boat was sent to the one furthest out, named Water Island, and it was found to be as rocky in reality as it was in appearance. It is formed of a hard, granular quartzose sandstone of a bluish grey colour, horizontally stratified, and the surface covered with blocks, over and between which a shallow soil with porcupine grass occurred. The exposed surfaces of the rock, King says, are coloured by the oxide of iron, which is so generally the case on the north and north-western coasts, that the name of the Red Coast has been justly given to a great portion of the continent. It is worth while describing the spinifex, or porcupine grass, in order to complete the picture of the island. It grows in tufts like large beehives, or piles of thrift grass, and the leaves project out rigidly in all directions, just like *chevaux-de-frise*. Merely brushing by will cause the points to strike into the limbs, and a very short walk in such country soon covers the legs with blood. The reader will often see it spoken of in future, for, unfortunately, two or three species of it extend throughout the whole continent, and form a part of the descriptions in the journal of every explorer.

The bay behind the islands was called Montagu Sound. It is bounded on the west by an island of considerable size, named Bigge Island, and separated from the main by Scott's Strait. On the 9th they steered through the latter, and, doubling Cape Pond, the land was observed to trend in very deeply to the south. On the next day they entered this opening, and the day following anchored at the end of it. It was a very extensive harbour, bounded by bold and irregular ranges of rocky hills. Among these were two peaks, Mounts Manning and Anderdon; and under them a large opening. To the eastward of the anchorage there was another, but not so interesting in appearance.

The next morning, King went in one boat to examine the inlet under Manning Peak, while Mr. Roe went in another to examine the river falling into the bottom of the bay. King's voyage proved most interesting. He proceeded up a considerable reach bounded by cliffs

two or three hundred feet high. The latter was four miles wide, and the red cliffs gave it a most solemn and picturesque appearance. At the end of this the channel turned to a river, which wound with a serpentine course along the foot of the hills. The latter were rugged and steep, but the banks, which had been formed by boulders of sandstone, detached from the summit of the overhanging hills, were now clothed with mangroves. It seemed as if the boulders had been formed by cascades flowing through the crevices of the sandstone, and some had been pushed thus from the surface of the cliffs upwards of two hundred feet from the water level. Everything around spoke in plain terms of the violence of the rainy season at times, and King thought it would be dangerous to expose a small vessel to the strength of the freshes in the stream. But like all Australian rivers whose channels are wide, and which are supplied by strong freshes, its course was very short. At the distance of only six miles from the end of the first reach the channel was only twenty-five yards wide, and its bed blocked up in a romantic glen by large red water-worn masses of sandstone.

About a mile below this they had unexpectedly found a spring of fresh water bubbling up among the mangroves, and yielding a very considerable quantity, although it was covered by the sea at every tide. While waiting for the flood, they ascended the hills to examine the country, but it was too mountainous to give them an extensive view. The prospect was stopped on every side by mountains higher still. The bed of the river could be traced as a deep gully or fissure.

To understand the nature of this country it should be borne in mind that it is a part of the coast where a very high portion of the tableland abuts directly upon the sea. In other places, such as Carpentaria, there is a wide extent of alluvial plains between the sandstone cliffs and the ocean, and it may be that the difference between the two localities is, that one is in the course of upheaval, and the other of subsidence. The detached islands, high, cliffy, and rocky, and all so very close to the shore, would seem to indicate a subsidence near the

red coast, while the shallows of Carpentaria indicate upheaval. In any case, however, the tableland abuts upon the sea in the most of Tasman's Land. This is the reason why it is reft into rocky inlets. This is the explanation of the detached islands, and the high precipitous cliffs of the shore. It must not be imagined that there are true mountains hereabouts. These are only harder portions of rock, where the softer red sandstone has been cut away by the ocean or by floods all around them. The view, therefore, from one of them is unequalled for peculiarity in any other part of the world. Flat hills, with sides like escarpments, rise one above another in geometrical forms, and yet very irregularly. The horizon seems divided into squares and parallel steps, amid which fresh water has burrowed and tunnelled until it has made the even strata look like children's toys or building bricks thrown into a heap. One might imagine anything from the various forms of rocks presented to view, except that rain had done it nearly all; and if the ground is viewed from a great height, the hills and valleys, plains and rocks, must be like the cracked surface of a dried mud plain.

On King's return he landed at the spring which had been seen only on the way up. The tide had covered it; but upon searching, another was found further back among the mangroves. This discovery was so valuable that the river was thought worthy of a name, and it was called after Mr. Hunter, the surgeon of the ship. The spring bubbled up at the rate of three gallons a minute.

Mr. Roe did not return until sunset of the following day from the examination of the river, which falls into the bottom of the port. When he left the cutter he pulled first towards a hill which seemed easy to ascend. From this elevation the country around seemed very stony and barren, while the banks of the river were low and lined with mangroves, amid which many salt-water inlets extended to the hills behind. Whilst Mr. Roe was making his observations, twelve natives, with two dogs, made their appearance on the opposite shore, which was separated from the hill by a soft mud

flat. They attempted to cross to him, shouting loudly as they advanced, but when half-way over they desisted, and slowly returned.

From this station, which was seven miles from the mouth, the explorers followed the course of the river: first in an easterly direction for ten miles, and then sometimes east and sometimes west of south for fifteen miles more. At this distance it was more than seventy yards wide, and most romantic in its scenery. The banks were lined with mangroves, but immediately behind them cliffs three hundred feet high raised their red fronts. Here the party landed to pass the night, and before dark Mr. Roe and his companion, Mr. Cunningham, went through the arduous task of climbing the hills. They were ill repaid for their labours. From the summit they could see nothing of the country. Ridges beyond ridges of rocky, wooded hills were all that met their gaze on every side. No signs of human being were seen, and the only traces of soil on the surface of these rocks were ant-hills composed of dry and dusty sand; and yet, in spite of this poverty, trees from twenty to forty feet high were abundant. Need it be said again that the rocks were of sandstone, in nearly horizontal strata, coated with a crust of quartz, and coloured by ferruginous oxide?

On their return to the tent they made preparations to pass the night. It was considered prudent to keep the boat afloat, and one of the men was placed in her for the purpose. Overpowered by fatigue, he fell asleep, and the boat was left dry upon the mud. He would have slept peaceably until the morning, but that the party on shore were disturbed continually by what was thought to be the rushing of alligators into the water beneath them. The noise may have been caused by stones and lumps of mud falling into the stream as the tide ebbed. A splash, however, was heard on the opposite side which was not so easily accounted for, and as an alligator had been seen swimming by in the evening, Mr. Roe became alarmed for the safety of the boat-keeper. He hastened to warn him of his danger, but we must suppose that the sleeper's anxieties were

allayed by seeing other people so watchful on his account. Like a sensible man, therefore, he refused to wake up, and his only reply to warnings was to consign all alligators to a warmer and even worse watered place than North Australia. Fortunately for him, there were no alligators near enough to hear him.

As soon as the tide ebbed, Mr. Roe commenced to return, and during his passage down saw no less than twelve alligators. The sleeper was, however, wide awake now, and his only return to the reptiles for their forbearance was to fire two balls at them. The bullets glanced off as harmlessly as his profane wishes. The river was named after Mr. Roe's father.

After completing their supply of water they left the river, but, owing to light winds, did not succeed in getting out of the harbour until the following morning. Its western side was very indistinctly seen, and it was thought probable that there might be other mountain streams there. The harbour was named after Prince Frederick, and the sound in front of it York Sound.

Passing Point Hardy, they entered another fine harbour bounded on the west by a group of islands, and on the east by a projection of land, which forms the eastern side of Prince Frederick's Harbour. The flood tide was sufficient to carry them to the bottom, so that they anchored off the east end of the most southerly of the group, which were named Coronation Islands. The harbour was called Port Nelson, and a high rocky hill which was distinguished over the land to the southward received the name of Mount Trafalgar.

Ever since the accident off Cape Cleveland the cutter had leaked a great deal. At first the amount of water was slight, but it had now increased so much that it became absolutely necessary to repair it or return to Port Jackson. Fortunately, they were upon a portion of the coast where the tides had a sufficient rise and fall to enable them to lay the ship upon the beach without difficulty, but York Sound and Prince Frederick's Harbour were too steep for the purpose, and they hailed with joy a small bay which lay before them, and seemed precisely suitable for the purpose.

Every heavy article was sent on shore; the sails were suspended to trees, so as to make tents, and the officers and crew were thus very comfortably housed. The anchorage was four hundred yards from the beach, which was near enough to protect their property, though no natives had as yet been seen. Near the tents some excellent water-holes were found, and thus they commenced the repair of the vessel under very favourable circumstances. The damage done to the ship was very considerable. Presuming my readers to be as little versed as myself in marine technology, I hesitate to plunge into the mysteries of stern sash and garboard streaks; suffice it to say, that though the injury was much greater than they believed, still they hoped to patch matters up so as to continue the survey.

The repairs were completed by the 5th of October, and the crew proceeded to restore the tents, &c., on board again. The little bay in which they were employed was thoroughly explored. It was named Careening Bay, and possessed but few peculiarities; the gouty stem tree was here, for the first time, noticed and described.*

From the summit of the ridge at the back of the bay, the country was seen to be continuous on a series of barren stony hills, clothed with small trees of stunted growth, except on their tops, which were bare. In the season which succeeds the rains, the hills are covered with a lofty reedy grass, which soon dries with the heat, and forms the food for bush fires made by the natives. No animals were seen about, and only a few pigeons; but two native huts were found; one with stone walls, which is very unusual in their habitations.

On the 9th, they left Careening Bay, and passing out between Cape Brewster and Coronation Islands,

* This tree is distinguished by the extraordinary swollen appearance of the stem, which looks as though the tree were diseased or the result of a freak of nature. The youngest as well as the oldest trees have the same deformed appearance, and inside the bark is a soft juicy pulp instead of wood, which is said to be serviceable as an article of food. The stem of the largest tree at Careening Bay was twenty-nine feet in girth; it is named the *Adansonia digitata*. A species is found in Africa. In Australia it occurs only on the north coast.

entered a spacious sound, called Brunswick Bay. From Cape Brewster the land extended for six miles to Cape Wellington. In front of the latter a cluster of islands extended to the westward, beyond which the mainland was only seen in detached points. Beyond the cape there was another considerable opening, trending to the south, and looking very much like a river. The wind and tide favoured, and the *Mermaid* stood in until high water, for there was very little danger in these inlets, which were deep and almost free from shoals. But at high tide there was no anchorage obtainable, and therefore the course was continued. At seven miles from the entrance they passed Rothsay Water—a considerable opening on the east side; and opposite to it was another called Munster Water, with several rocky islands in front, prettily covered with grass and trees. The course was continued, as the direction of the main stream turned south-east; and five miles from this the channel opened out into an extensive sheet of water, with two large islands in the middle. Between one of these and the shore they found an anchorage in a very pleasing little strait. Before them the country opened into an extensive plain, from the midst of which two mountains rose precipitously. They were steep and well wooded, and capped by a wall, either like battlements, or the hills at the end of Cambridge Gulf.

The further examination of the opening was conducted in boats; King going to explore the continuation of the river on the south-east end, while Mr. Roe went along the north and east shores of the basin. Upon leaving the cutter, King crossed to the south-east end, which appeared to receive several streams. About two miles further, the banks of the channel contracted, and trended to the south-east on so short a course that it seemed, as one looked down it, to be like a strait, and no land could be seen in the distance beyond. Fourteen miles further up, the river decreased to half a mile wide. The scenery was magnificent. The usual cliffs rose up as precipices directly over the water, and what made this more beautiful was, that the surface was continually

broken by salt water inlets, which made the sides look like turreted castles.

Down the face of these castellated escarpments, water was seen trickling from between the strata, showing what becomes of the surface drainage in this country. But they soon had a better demonstration of this. At the distance of seventeen miles, the noise of a cascade could be heard falling, and an opening in the mangroves exposed to view a cascade flowing out from the rocks, in width about sixty feet, and of very considerable height. On a coast where water was not often seen, this was a sight as gratifying as it was beautiful. It is not exceptionable, moreover. Captain Grey, as it will be seen in a further part of this volume, was upon this coast during the raining season, and he says that the whole of the cliffs pour down water after bad weather, and that the ultimate exit of the surface drainage from the middle of these sandstone precipices forms a most beautiful phenomenon.

Three miles beyond the cascade the party put ashore to rest and refresh the boat's crew. Mr. Hunter, the surgeon, ascended a hill to examine the country. But after all his fatigue he did not see much. The view was such as might be seen from any rock elevation hereabouts; that is, rocky square-shaped mountains and sterile desert. The character of the river was the same as Hunter's and Roe's Rivers, in Prince Frederick's Harbour, excepting that the hills were less precipitous, and rather more wooded. Two miles further the channel became more narrow and tortuous, and the mangroves more abundant on lower banks. Beyond this the party did not go. Prince Regent's River, for so it was named, has been since further explored, but it is an unimportant inlet.

On reaching the cutter, it was found that Mr. Roe had returned the preceding evening. He had examined the north-east shore of the basin, and traced two small openings for a short distance. They were neither interesting nor important. On his return he had pulled round the south side of an island, and landed. In making a fire the flame caught the neighbouring grass,

and in a very short time the whole surface of the island was in a blaze. The grass burnt rapidly, but the timber made a more substantial fire, which burnt for days afterwards, filling the inlet with a blue smoke, or brown haze, which hung upon the dark waters like a pall.

During the absence of the boats, the shores of the bay of anchorage had been found to afford extensive pools of fresh water, which supplied all the wants of the ship. Mr. Cunningham had also ascended the hills, which rose nearly perpendicularly for four hundred feet. They were thickly clothed with trees and plants, growing amid spinifex grass. Kangaroos were plentiful, even where there was nothing for them to eat, and this seemed to indicate better land a little further inland.

These rocks, which caused such a beautiful addition to the scenery, and which so fruitfully supplied stores of fresh water, were anything but agreeable to persons engaged in the exploration. King's crew were now all laid up with sores upon their feet and legs, received in scrambling over the heights, and the red glare had invalided a good many by causing ophthalmia. These were serious obstacles, and, combined with the fact that the rainy season was now approaching, had the effect of putting an end to the survey for a time. While King was deliberating in beating out of the river, the cutter leaked badly. This made him decide upon returning instantly to Port Jackson. It was with great regret that he did so, for the land to the westward appeared very deeply indented and interesting. He therefore sailed to Sydney. Nothing remarkable occurred on the return voyage, except that in a thunderstorm the cutter struck upon a rock in entering Sydney Heads, and only by the merest chance escaped total shipwreck. He anchored on the coast September 6, 1820.

The amount of work done in this survey was very small indeed; owing to the unfortunate accident in the early part of the voyage, the subsequent proceedings had been much crippled. The repairs at Careening Bay had occupied time which would otherwise have been spent in exploration, and the state of the weather

had been generally unfavourable throughout. But if this was the smallest survey, it was certainly the most interesting, and on all the north coast there is no portion about which so much curiosity is still felt as the lofty cliffs and deeply cut fiords of the well-named Red Coast. Readers will see more about it further on in this volume, and how the charms it had for the enthusiastic Grey led to one of the most interesting and unfortunate expeditions recorded in Australian history.

CHAPTER XIV.

KING'S LAST VOYAGE.

New ship—Bathurst Bay—Encounter with the natives—Hanover Bay—Port George the Fourth — Cockerill Islands — Cape Leveque — Point Emerieau—Cape Baskerville—King George's Sound—Swan River—The West Coast—Establishment at Port Cockburn.

Soon after King's return it was found that the *Mermaid* was utterly unfit for further service, without undergoing an amount of repair which would take up a great deal too much time. The Government, therefore, purchased a brig, of 170 tons burden, and equipped it for King's party. The crew was now numerically increased in consequence of the larger accommodation, and on the 26th of May, 1821, they sailed from Sydney. The brig was named the *Bathurst*, and the course was through Torres Straits. In passing along the east coast, many opportunities were taken of landing, and examining the shore. It would be a thrice-told tale to repeat observations which have been made so often on this part of Australia, besides which the description would embrace little more than a list of rocks, plants, and natives in canoes. But in Bathurst Bay they met with something more than these. A vessel, named the *Frederick*, had been wrecked in this bay, and King landed with a boat's crew, to examine what remained of it. The party soon obtained all they wanted, and had scattered over the beach collecting shells, when all at once King and three companions were cut off from the beach by the natives. Fortunately they had one gun among them, and this served to keep the savages in check, and after a slow and fatiguing retreat over a reef of rocks, during

which the explorers were obliged to walk backward, with their faces to their opponents, the relief party was reached. The blacks then drew off, but the matter did not end there. As soon as King went on board, spears were thrown, and the blacks were fired upon and wounded.

While this was going on, Mr. Cunningham had visited Clark's Island, which lies off the main shore. One portion of it possessed features of peculiar interest, which correspond singularly with what Grey afterwards found on the Red Coast. Mr. Cunningham says: "that the remarkable structure of the geological features of this islet, led him to examine the southern part, which was most exposed to the weather." The lower stratum of the island was a quartz and jasper conglomerate, about twenty feet thick, and above this there was ten feet of schistose rock, so soft that the weather had excavated several tiers of galleries or caves. The sides of these were covered with drawings. They were executed upon a ground of red ochre (rubbed on the black schist), with dots of an argillaceous paste. They represented figures of sharks, porpoises, turtles, lizards, trepang, star-fishes, canoes, water-gourds, and some quadrupeds, probably intended for kangaroos and dogs. The figures, besides being outlined by the dots, were decorated all over with the same pigment in dotted transverse belts. Besides these, a gallery led round to a cave large enough for twenty natives, whose recent fireplaces appeared on the floor. Many turtles' heads were placed on the shelves or niches of the rock, and the roof and sides were covered with the same sort of uncouth figures as those just described. Altogether, there were nearly one hundred and fifty of them, and very different from those charcoal drawings described by Flinders, as existing in a cave in Carpentaria.

It was not until August that the *Bathurst* reached Hanover Bay, where King had desisted from his surveying operations the year before. This bay is not very important, but it becomes interesting because it was the basis of Captain Grey's operations in 1839. King left

it on the 11th, and after passing round its western head, entered a deep opening. This had been seen on the last voyage, and an island on it named Camp Island, from its appearance at a distance. After passing along a rocky shore for some distance, King came into an extensive basin. This was thought to be the opening of some important river—a hope which each succeeding inlet always raised; but it was not even a bay. The bottom was found to be a strait, and the western side of the opening an island. The island was named Augustus, and the port after George the Fourth. Beyond the inlet the land was broken and rugged, with a decided trend to the south; but King had had the misfortune to lose two of his anchors, and he could only very cautiously approach the shore. Unluckily, the weather here was hazy, and the basin lined with innumerable islands, so that a respectful distance had to be kept, in spite of the desire felt to get a near view.

Not that they had much loss, for this part of the coast was not only very dangerous, but is of very little interest. It was examined, subsequently, by Stokes, at least that part near the deep opening which was now named Collier Bay. It was of little interest, and fringed by numerous islands and a coral reef. Some of the cliffs present a remarkable appearance, however. They are grey and aged looking, and where the weather has eaten deeply into the surface of the rock, the remains form sandstone pillars on the level summit, like the battlements of a fortress.

In consequence of the islands and shoals, the next continuous part of the mainland seen was Cape Leveque. It had in the meantime undergone a complete change. The shore was low, and fronted by a sandy beach, and a reef, over which the sea broke for more than a mile. There were here and there shrubs, but the luxuriance of the tropical vegetation had undergone a complete change. Altogether, the coast was dreary and desolate, and reminded King that he was again beginning to explore the part of which North-West Cape is the type and example.

King, on laying down the chart of his course, found Cape Leveque to be the point under which Dampier had anchored in 1688. That was his first voyage, it will be remembered, and it was from the view then obtained of the coast that he became so confident of the results if he were allowed to make a second. Really, he must have been easily pleased, or very sanguine, if the view which this part of Australia presented inspired him with much hopes of the rest.

On the 22nd, the *Bathurst* was abreast of a point which was laid down on the French charts as Emerieau Island; but it was certainly not an island, and therefore only the first part of the name was retained. Near it the country falls back, and forms a bay, the bottom of which was visible from the mast-head, and appeared to be nothing but sand dunes. King dared not take his vessel any nearer, because of the loss of his anchors. And this was not the only inconvenience. The crew were necessarily very much harassed by keeping watch at night, and by the time they had reached Cape Leveque, this had told upon them so much that nearly the whole were invalided.

Rocks and islands, sand dunes and reefs, shoals and low mangrove shores, are all that follow in the record of King's surveys for many days subsequently. It would be useless to attempt to follow him along a shore which neither to him, Baudin, Dampier, nor Tasman, who had gone before, presented one single point of interest. Point Coulomb, in lat. 17° 13′, affords some little difference from sheer aridity and monotony. The red cliffs are seen here, and this is one of their furthest points westward. The interior is higher than to the northward, and rises at the distance of eight miles from the shore to wooded hills. Though this is a verdant and pleasing prospect in comparison to what occurs all around, the coast itself undergoes no difference, but still preserves its desert appearance.

One remarkable peculiarity here was the haze which always hung upon the shore. This made it look a little less monotonous. Atmospheric moisture caused great refraction, and thus sandy hillocks seemed in the dis-

tance, like chalky cliffs; stunted bushes like tall towering trees, and distant headlands peered above the horizon like fine rocky bluffs. What a pity it was not all real! Instead of that, the reality was only the more wretched when stripped of the enchantment of distance. The mist which gave such pleasing visions from afar, was a stifling vapour reflecting the sand and rocks.

King soon got tired of it all. He sailed along it for a few degrees further; but as the wind blew constantly from the south-west, and his progress was very slow and tedious, he left the coast, and refitted at the Mauritius.

From Port Louis he proceeded to the south-west coast, and anchored in King George's Sound. Here he remained some days, and communicated with the natives, who were peaceable and harmless. The sound had been visited before in 1820, by a merchant vessel, and this accounted for the savages here being familiar with the native names for water and kangaroo at Port Jackson. The reader need hardly be told that a different language is spoken by every tribe, and though the languages of the north-east coast seem most diffused, none of them occupy a very large space in any territory.

While at the sound, Mr. Cunningham made an excursion to the top of Bald Head. The observations he made are worth recording, because the details of one locality serve better to give an idea of the nature of the country than any generalities about coast line and rocks. Mr. Cunningham says: "Upon reaching the summit of the ridge, and clearing a rocky gully which intersected our track, we entered an elevated valley of pure white sand, bounded on either side by ridges forty feet high, that were in themselves totally bare, excepting a thin clothing of shrubs upon the top. The surface reflected a heat which was scarcely supportable. The air in the valley was stagnant and suffocating, though there was a light breeze upon the summit, and the elevation was considerable. After traversing the whole extent of this sandy vale, which is one-third

of a mile long, with scarcely a plant to attract attention, we perceived at its extremity some remarkably fine specimens of *Candollea cruciformis*, which, in spite of the poverty and looseness of the drifting sand, had risen to large spreading trees, which were covered with flowers and fruit. But so painful was it to the eyes and senses to remain for a moment stationary in this heated valley, that whilst I gathered seeds, my servant was obliged to hurry to the ridge. But for this fine plant, and the blue flowered *Scævola nitida*, the whole scene would have had all the horrors of an extreme aridity."

The ridge was of granite, and delightfully cool. The extremity was the highest summit of the range, while another sandy valley separated them from Bald Head. This is of remarkable appearance from the sea, having on either side of its bare sandy summit a contrasting brushy vegetation. A calcareous rock, in a decomposing state, capped the sand in many places; but the head itself is of granite. Altogether, its white sand, black brushwood, and rugged granite foundation, forming a fine headland, is none the more fertile for having a characteristic Australian appearance.

From the sound, King sailed along the west coast, checking many points of the survey of the west coast, and finally anchoring in Swan River. This inlet has already been described in connection with the Dutch voyages. Since these, it had been surveyed during Baudin's expedition. From the Swan, King slowly sailed northwards, because the French had only examined the coast very superficially, from Rottenest Island to Sharks Bay. He kept about six miles from the shore, which was near enough to see all there was to be seen, which was very little indeed of any importance. The coast was formed by sandy hillocks or dunes, from a hundred to a hundred and fifty feet high, here and there sprinkled with shrubs, but quite bare in many parts. Behind this frontier a second range of hills was occasionally seen, with trees upon it. This last was the sandstone tableland.

King's observations here were very just and accu-

rate. In the succeeding volume, as well as in this, the reader will have ample opportunity of testing the truth and repeating the monotony of this coast line. It is the same as the Red Coast, only that a rampart of sand-hills intervenes between it and the sea. This rampart is a few miles wide, and through it small streams and sometimes wide mountain torrents flow down from the ranges to the sea. These streams are few and far between, and can only be seen from the land. Their banks are well grassed and even fertile, but the intervening country is a hopeless scrub, through which it is very difficult to force a path. Many explorers have done so, and their story will hereafter be told. For the present, let the reader bear in mind the character of this country. It is easily recollected, and once remembered it will explain in a moment all that subsequent explorers had to tell.

On the 18th, the inland range had reached a height of a thousand feet. It was, of course, flat-topped, and at its northern end were four to five hills, only one of which was peaked, and this range was noticed by the French, and named by them. Captain King rather discourteously named them again—probably his visit to the mountain had refreshed his memory on the subject of Flinders' wrongs. The range was called after Captain Moresby, and the hills Wizard Hills, and Mounts Fairfax, &c. The shore in front of them was a sand bank of a reddish hue. King noticed one or two openings, which he rightly considered to be mountain streams. He said that the country appeared to be better wooded than in other parts, and as smoke arose in many places, he considered that it was evidently a favourite resort for the natives.

Hence the coast trends north-west to a bare patch of sand, which was all the more remarkable because the coast had now become a little less sandy than the northern portions. In latitude 28° 25′ it changed altogether. It was now steep and cliffy, with very few patches of sand. I have to beg my readers' pardon for these details. King had not a pleasant task on this dismal shore, neither have those who try to abridge his

labours; but I have very nearly done with them now. It is important to remark these sandy patches, for among them lay the River Murchison, which is such an interesting feature upon this west coast.

King next entered into Sharks Bay, on the 20th. He had not been anchored five minutes before the correctness of Dampier's appellation was proved by the number of sharks which surrounded the brig. One was caught, measuring eleven feet; but in general they were more numerous than large. But if their bodies were small, that was not the case with their appetites, for they were extremely voracious.

And here we shall leave King. His observations from this point were merely confirmatory of other explorations. Besides this, a few days more brought him to Cape Leveque, which completed his chart. As he passed along, Point Disaster and Goodenough Bays were discovered and named; but they possessed no point of interest, and did not differ from any other part of the north-west coast, either in barrenness or monotony. The only elevation seen inland was a remarkable flat-topped hill, near Point Cunningham, named Carlisle Head.

The *Bathurst* arrived in Sydney on the 25th March, 1822. This was King's last voyage. He had during its progress sufficiently explored a good deal of the north-west coast; but five hundred and ten miles of it, between Port George the Fourth and Depuch Island, he was obliged to leave unexamined. The land laid down on the maps of that period is nothing but an archipelago of islands fronting a mainland whose situation was quite uncertain. King's examination of these islands was carried on as far as Cape Villaret; but between that and Depuch Island the coast had only been seen occasionally by Baudin, and then only in detatched portions. All was left in conjecture; but as the space was of considerable extent, King fondly hoped that in it might be found an opening leading to the interior. The fact of there being so many islands ought to have told him differently, because where they were so numerous and small, it was against reason to

suppose the coast was not near at hand. Subsequent examinations by Wickam and Stokes proved this, and showed that that unknown coast was utterly devoid of interest, possessing but one small river, as far as the imperfect examination of a marine survey could ascertain.

In taking leave of King, he deserves, in all justice, a meed of praise for his labours. He was a courageous and enterprising explorer, who did more to advance the knowledge of Australian geography than any who preceded him, except, perhaps, Flinders. His reputation as an explorer is especially dear to the colonists, because he was almost a native of the colony. He was the son of Captain King, who came out with Governor Phillip's fleet in 1788, and was born in Norfolk Island in 1791. He was for a long time subsequently a member of the New South Wales Legislative Council; and having attained the rank of rear-admiral, he died some few years ago.

One of the principal results of King's explorations was the establishment of a settlement at Port Cockburn, in the strait between Bathurst and Melville Islands, on the north coast. Captain J. Gordon Bremer was despatched by the Government, in 1824, to take possession of Arnhem's Land, and form an establishment on the most eligible spot which could be found for a mercantile depôt. The expedition was confined to the *Tamar* ship, but it was to be joined by the *Countess of Harcourt* and *Lady Nelson,* transports at Sydney. The second officer of the *Tamar* was Lieutenant Roe, King's former companion, present surveyor-general of Western Australia, and, as before stated, the veteran of Australian exploration.

Having cleared Torres Straits, the *Tamar* anchored in Port Essington. All the boats were hoisted out, and the marines landed. A union-jack was fixed upon a tree, and formal possession taken, amid three volleys from the marines, and a royal salute from the *Tamar.* No doubt this was a very useful and indispensable ceremony, and the only proper way to take possession; but the port was not to be taken so easily. The land obstinately refused to give up fresh water. Parties

were despatched in every direction, but only one watering-place was discovered, and that in the sand, affording a most precarious supply. The adjoining country was found to be very good forest land, well timbered, but parched with drought, which, of course, was decisive of its utility to the settlers. It was no use stopping, so they determined to try Apsley Strait. That, it will be remembered, is the passage between two islands which King mistook for a large river.

Light winds retarded the passage to Cape Van Diemen, and it was not until the 26th September that they anchored in St. Asaph Bay. Possession was taken first, and a search for water ensued. At the expiration of five or six days, a small river, and plenty of water, was discovered on Melville Island, with a good place for a settlement near it. The ships were moved there on the 2nd, and parties immediately landed to commence operations with the axe and saw. The projection of land fixed upon for a town was named after the commandant, Captain Barlow, and the harbour after Admiral Sir G. Cockburn. After the settlement had gone through the preliminary inconvenience of a new territory in such a climate, all went smoothly enough. The natives were peaceable; and though dishonest, the information obtained from them was of considerable service. In a month or two, however, a change came. Open acts of hostility were committed, and natives, upwards of a hundred in number, kept the colonists in a continual state of alarm. It was not until some lives were sacrificed that comparative peace was obtained; but only large parties could with safety leave the fort, or explore the neighbourhood.

This was the beginning of the misfortunes of the Melville Island settlement. Its subsequent history was from bad to worse. The excessive heat, the aridity of the climate, and, more than all, the unhealthiness of the locality, all told sensibly on the colonists, and made it more like a cemetery than a flourishing settlement. In 1826 things reached such a state that it was evident the colony must be moved, or the whole north coast would have to be abandoned.

Accordingly a new settlement was made in Raffles' Bay. The command was given to Captain Barker, a gentleman in whom the Government had the utmost confidence, and whose unfortunate fate threw a gloom over the early history of South Australia. But Raffles' Bay was no better than Melville Island. For three years the colonists held their ground, amid difficulties which are terrible even to read. Whether these might have been obviated by better management, or a different system of colonization, is a question for other pages than these. It is sufficient to say that Raffles' Bay was found quite unsuitable as a settlement; and the whole north coast was abandoned in 1829. The subsequent attempts at colonizing some part of this immense coast line will be narrated further on.

CHAPTER XV.

THE FIRST OVERLANDERS.

Hume at Lake Bathurst—Stirling and Ovens discover Maneiro Downs—Hovell and Hume—Difficult Ranges—The Murray or Hume—The Ovens—The Australian Alps—The Goulburn or Hovell—Great Dividing Range—Port Phillip.

DURING all the time of Captain King's surveys, no further measures had been taken by the Government to ascertain the nature of the interior. Yet the country was very slowly explored. It was not then, as now, necessary to travel many hundred miles to get beyond the settled districts; neither was there a desert or some other natural barrier to stop all further travelling without formidable preparations. The bush was then little known, and a squatter's run often meant a tract of pastoral country as far as his cattle liked to stray, and beyond which all was unknown to him. When one settler more adventurous than another, liked to go further than this, he was sure to make discoveries, and thus the country to the west of the Blue Mountains was examined almost by inches.

It will be easily understood that only very imperfect records remain to us of what was done in this manner. Some of the discoveries remained unknown to any but the explorers, who found it to be their interest to conceal what they knew. Others, again, made known what they had seen to their immediate neighbours, and thus the news slowly filtered to the public ear. It was quite the exception, however, to bring such things immediately under the notice of the Government, and the records of such generosity are very few. Foremost among the exceptions stands the name of Mr. Hamilton Hume. He was a

native of the colony, and was born in 1797, and from a very early age distinguished himself as an explorer. When only seventeen, he discovered the country around Berrima. This was to the southward of Sydney, and on the east side of the range, where the semi-tropical flora of this peculiar tract, and the richness of its soil, have made it one of the most important parts of New South Wales.

In 1817, he discovered Lake Bathurst, amid fertile plains, to the south-west of Sydney. The lake is situate on the tableland, and is over 2000 feet above the sea level. For this service Mr. Hume received a grant of 300 acres of land, and from thenceforth was very much connected with exploring expeditions, as we shall have to relate.

It was not long after the discovery of the lake, that the country was taken up by enterprising settlers. The ground adjoining was of the best description for pastoral purposes, and, what was of great importance in this climate, was well supplied with water. But, in truth, scarcity of water was one of the last things which the settlers had to fear. This elevated tableland is bleak and exposed, and during the winter visited by heavy snow storms and floods. Within a short distance of Lake Bathurst, Lake George was found. The two were scarcely ten miles apart, in a direct line. Lake George is a fine sheet of water, in latitude 30° 48′, twenty miles in length, and eight in breadth, and 2129 feet above the sea. It is situate in a part of the Dividing Range where a westerly spur, composed of serpentine and porphyry, divides the tributaries of the Lachlan from those of the Murrumbidgee Rivers. It is a locality famed in New South Wales for picturesque beauty or the savage sublimity of its scenery. Gentle downs and rugged peaks, arid plains and snow-capped mountains, form the staple of the prospect as one journeys around the lake.

In 1823, an expedition was undertaken by Captain Currie and Brigade-General Oyens, to examine the southward of Lake George. The mountainous aspect of the land in that direction had not tempted the settlers to its exploration, and very little was known about

11. The two explorers did not go far, and, as usual, all they saw was of the greatest importance. When they had crossed the first range, fifteen miles to the south of the lake, they found an extensive plain to the southward, and to the south-west the darkening gullies of the Murrumbidgee Mountains partially covered with snow. Other ranges succeeded, with plains again, and then they came to the first river they met with, called the South Fish River. All this country had been discovered before. The guide who was with them had been over this tract, and he told them that there was another fine river further south, which the natives called the Murrumbidgee. They reached this on the 1st June, at about thirty miles from Lake George. It ran through fine forest country and small plains. The explorers were obliged to follow the river to the southward, for it was then running too high for them to cross. In tracing it up towards its sources, they passed through much good country of forests and plains. The ranges were covered with pine trees, and bold in their aspect, while the plains, though well grassed, were very stony. On the 3rd, they reached an extensive plain, which proved to be the commencement of a very long chain of downs. These were explored for nearly seventy miles without reaching their termination. They were plains of well-grassed and well-watered land; bounded on the west by the snowy mountains of the Murrumbidgee, and on the east by coast range. Want of provisions prevented the explorers from going further; but the tract they discovered has since become one of the valuable pastoral tracts in the colony of New South Wales, and has at present several townships upon it.

The Murrumbidgee River, thus discovered, soon became an object of interest to geographical inquirers, not only because it added one more to the number of Australian rivers, which emptied itself into the unknown interior, but also because it seemed to offer a very good chance for exploring the south-west line of country between Sydney and Port Phillip. The utter ignorance of the colonists on the subject of the intervening land had completely prevented further investigation; but as

one river had been found to the south, and high mountains seen in advance, there could be no great risk in making the attempt. It was first undertaken in 1824, by the enterprising Mr. Hume. Governor Brisbane entertained the idea that a knowledge of all the rivers on the east coast would be obtained by landing a party of convicts at Wilson's Promontory, with the promise of a reward if they reached Sydney from thence. Hume was asked to take charge of the party, but he refused. After considerable negotiation, it was arranged that he and Hovell, a retired shipmaster, should lead a party overland from Lake George to Western Port, the Government finding only a very small portion of the equipment, and six prisoners to form the party.

Starting from the settled districts, early in October, they did not arrive at the Murrumbidgee until the 22nd of the same month. The river was then much too high for them to ford, and their supply of provisions so scanty, that they could not think of waiting until the waters subsided. They set about at once to make a raft, but out of the multitude of trees around them, they could not find one whose timber was light enough to float. This was a vexatious obstacle at the very commencement; but Hume was quite equal to the emergency. In one of his former expeditions he had learned to use a cart as a punt, and they had one with them now. Off went its wheels, axles and shafts in a moment, and by the aid of a tarpaulin it was soon converted into a very serviceable raft. Hume and one of the men then swam across the river with a thin line between their teeth, and by its aid pulled a rope over. The raft was then timidly launched, and after three or four trips had carried all their stores across. The cattle were then brought over. This was not quite so successful. The stream was so strong, that they were repeatedly turned over in the water, but by good management none were drowned. Thus ended their first adventure.

It was, however, by no means their last. They were upon the western declivity of the tableland, and had to learn that the streams were not half so deep, dangerous, and difficult, as the chasms they had cut for themselves;

in flowing to the westward. Had they understood the nature of the coast range, they would not have attempted to cross near the sources of the inland waters, where the rapidity of the fall has made the torrents cut very deep into the mountain side. Further to the west, their course would have been over plains, boggy perhaps, and with wider rivers; but still not difficult to travel over. As it was, their journey was across rivers and up wall-like precipices; over table lands and down perpendicular chasms, until it was a marvel to them, as it is to us, how they were able to penetrate so far and carry out their objects as they did.

Immediately after leaving the banks of the Murrumbidgee, travelling was good enough. They moved in a south-west direction, and this brought them through hilly, forest country, with high but not very steep ranges. The woodlands terminated in beautiful grassy plains, skirted by a forest; but walled in with such awfully rocky mountains that the hope of ascending them quite died out of their hearts. This was really a barrier. To ascend it was out of the question, and the next difficult thing was to find a pass. Up to the 24th was spent in the search; but all in vain. Then, unfortunately, disappointment soured their tempers, and the two leaders quarrelled. Naturally, the reader will ask, what was the necessity of two leaders? This was one consequence of leaving such a journey to private enterprise. Hovell shared the expense, and of course wished to share the command. He certainly took more than his share of inconvenience, for he now left Mr. Hume to trace up the south-west course; while he, with one man, persisted in an insane intention of following up a chain of ponds, leading, goodness knows where. He was an old sea-captain and no bushman; so that when he found himself standing on the edge of a rocky chasm he lost no time in returning to his companions. Hume in the mean time, had met with a stream at a few miles. This he succeeded in tracing, though with much difficulty, until, bending about due west, it descended rapidly through a narrow chasm, and poured its waters at right angles into

another stream. This was about twenty yards wide, in a beautiful valley, bounded on the west by a perpendicular range.

It was not until the 26th, that they got through the pass thus discovered, and by this time they had found the carts such an impediment, that they resolved to leave them until their return. They concealed everything as well as they could, and then tried to get through the next range before them. The natives had told them that they would have no difficulty whatever in this, as there was a pass close at hand. It certainly was a pass; but that was all—a mere footpath, scarcely wide enough for one person. Worse than this, the further side was at the foot of a mountain-wall nearly perpendicular. Of course, there was no resource but to retrace their steps.

It seemed as if they should never get out of this valley. They now tried a south direction. At thirteen miles, they came to the other end, enclosed as usual by perpendicular walls, washed at the base by the river. A small opening led them in another direction; but it was found to be a mere mountain chasm. There was only one course left, and that was to try and ascend the ranges. To their astonishment, they succeeded. There were little ledges on the mountain sides; by following these on a zigzag course, they reached the top on the 29th of October.

The summit of the tableland was broken into little hills and valleys, with numerous creeks, both deep and rapid, causing much inconvenience. On the third day, after skirting a large swamp, they climbed an eminence rather higher than the rest, and found, to their great disgust, that they were near a precipitous descent which formed one of the terminations of the tableland. The valley below did not give them much insight into the nature of the country in advance. There was a tract of level country some ten miles off; but in other respects the view was interrupted by the lofty mountains which surrounded them on every side. The descent from the range was terrific, and only accomplished with much difficulty: but they got down at

last, and found themselves on the bank of a small stream with rapids in its bed and good pasturage upon its banks. Hume rested by its waters one day, for both cattle and horses were much fatigued by their recent exertions.

They imagined now that they had done with mountains for a time, because when they crossed the river, very nice plains and open forest country succeeded. In the midst of these, they found a strong river, about one hundred feet wide, with banks of very rich soil, and evidently liable to frequent inundations. They had not got their cart now, and as it was too deep to cross; they had to trace it down. In a very short distance they came upon a native ford, and then they crossed without difficulty. It was but too evident, in a short time, that they had by no means done with the mountains, for they could now see them plain enough and closing in upon them. On the 4th of November, they left the banks of the river and shaped their course for an opening in the mountains, bearing east of south. This opening was found impracticable, and they were obliged to return to the river, with the renewed dread of being again shut in by the mountains. It was thought better, however, to lose no more time in searching for passes, and so they at once attempted the slope in front of them. In doing so, they made a great mistake. When they got to the top, with the greatest difficulty, they found that it was quite separated from the main range, except by a very narrow neck with precipitous sides; and their work had to be done over again. It was done amid exertions and dangers far surpassing anything they had met with hitherto; and the summit proved to be another piece of tableland, thickly covered with very large timber. It was the perfect counterpart of the table-mountain they had previously crossed, and like it, soon terminated in a steep descent. Before they left it, they saw immediately in front of them a valley extending in a south-west direction, about two miles broad, and with a stream in the centre: beyond the stream was a broken, mountainous country. There was a remarkable chasm in the midst, backed by

peaked and jagged hills, whose dark outlines showed their stern, rocky character.

The descent into the valley was not very easily accomplished. The animals could with difficulty keep their feet upon the steep mountain sides. On one occasion, a stone slipped from the feet of one of the bullocks, and he rolled over immediately, dragging one of the men down with him. Fortunately, they were stopped at some distance by a tree, and this saved both their lives, though the man was very much hurt. The party rested for one day on the sides of the stream in the valley, and then went down its banks to the southward. As they proceeded, it became wider and deeper, and broken by falls: it was nice, easy travelling; but far too easy to last in such a country. Their progress was soon stopped by the mountains which formed the southern boundary of the valley, and rising in precipitous walls on either side of the stream. Messrs. Hovell and Hume ascended first to see the nature of the ground, little prepared for the prospect in store for them. When they were about half-way up and had got above the top of the valley, they were astounded with the sight which burst upon their view. Mountains of peaked shape and covered with snow were seen extending in a circle to the south and eastward, in a stupendous chain, about twenty-one miles away. The view was magnificent: below, the green valley, its rich undulations, and the clear stream rolling along its pebbly channel; beyond this, the valley slopes crowned with dark forest; and then, far beyond, the angular outline of dazzling whiteness, which reflected back the brilliancy of the sun, and showed an awful contrast with the gloomy, savage gullies underneath. A sight like this was worth all the inconveniences of exploration. To unlock such scenes to the gaze of men was worth a lifetime of labour—almost like the scenes of enchantment, delighting the view of the fairy prince of romance.

This was the first discovery of the Australian Alps—a name which was immediately applied to them by Mr. Hume. The party now saw that it would be useless to try to follow their old course with such obstacles

as these before them; and they determined to go fifty or sixty miles to the westward. At last, they had hit upon the right course. In a short distance they found to their satisfaction that the hills to the right had dwindled down to a very moderate elevation; but even there they were not completely done with ravines. On the 10th of November, they arrived unexpectedly on the brink of one with precipitous sides, not less than one thousand feet deep, and running in a north and south direction. This seemed at first an insurmountable obstacle; but, at a mile and a half, they found a path by which they were enabled to descend, where the walls of the ravine were broken into hills of moderate elevation. It was about half a mile broad, and to the southward it dwindled to a mere chasm. In the ravine they camped amid a dense scrub. They were under the impression that the western side of this valley was a range, along which they could proceed to the southward; but on arriving at the summit, found that it was a mere ridge, almost too narrow for the cattle to cross. From this point the summits of the Alps were again seen with their beautiful and dazzling pinnacles, and all around from west to north was a broken outline of rugged mountains, looming one above another, until they faded into misty outlines in the distance.*

After crossing some minor ranges connected with this ravine, the explorers at last descended into a beautiful undulating country, watered by streams which flowed to the north-west. The only drawback to it was, that it was slightly boggy; but in other respects, the travelling was easy, and a great change for the better from the terrible ranges. It was still hilly around them, for the west was the only direction where the view was not intercepted by lofty mountains. On the

* The party were much tormented about this place by the attacks of a small fly, which had the same sanguinary tastes as the mosquito, but was far more annoying and painful in its attacks. Rather smaller than the housefly, it acts with such celerity that it has no sooner settled on the face or hands than it inflicts instantaneously a painful wound, which often bleeds subsequently. It is called by the colonists the kangaroo fly; and though not very common, the author can testify that it is one of the most annoying pests of Australia.

15th, when they were about six miles from a hill they had named Battery Mount, they met with a large creek of water and a chain of ponds, both apparently from the range and running southward. This led them to a fine river, not less than eighty yards in breadth, deep and rapid: its aspect to the explorers appeared beautiful; not only because of the splendid verdure on its banks and the lagoons scattered near, but because it seemed to them the finest running stream hitherto discovered in Australia. It was named the Hume, after its discoverer. The upper part till retains its first appellation; but the lower part was named the Murray by Sturt, and by that title alone it is familiarly known.

At first, such a large river of course pleased the explorers very much; but it soon became a subject of serious embarrassment. The means at their disposal were utterly inadequate for crossing, so they followed it down to look for a ford; but no such thing was to be found. The further the river flowed, the wider it became; it was useless, therefore, to look for a ford in that direction, and they turned up the stream to cross near the sources. A journey of about fifteen miles brought them to where it narrowed to forty yards; and there, by means of a hastily constructed wicker boat, covered with tarpaulin, they crossed in safely with their baggage and made the cattle swim. On the evening of the 20th, they left the stream and camped in an open forest. Four miles from the Murray they came upon another river, and a boat had again to be constructed. After extricating themselves from the usual series of creeks, lagoons, and swamps, which ensued, they passed in their south-west course over the extremities of a range of hills. These were a collateral branch of the great north and south Alpine Chain, and were terminated on their further side by another fine stream, which was easily crossed, as the others had been, for the party were now quite accustomed to such obstacles.

From this river, they advanced between two ranges of hills over excellent forest: this was gradually rising towards a high range which lay before them. It was no use trying to avoid it, so they crossed on the 24th.

This was the Dividing Range between the waters of the Murray and the southern streams; it was a high but by no means formidable range of hills; and from its summit, the Alps and its numerous spurs were visible to the eastward. To the south-west their course appeared clear and open, and could not possibly have presented a greater contrast than it did to the north side. The grass was everywhere dry and withered; there was no water in the creeks, and it seemed as if it had not rained in this country for months. Want of water threatened to become a serious inconvenience; but in a few miles they met another river, which was named after Major Ovens.

There was little difficulty in crossing the Ovens, for the water was so low that it was fordable in many places: the bottom was pebbly, and the banks rather higher than those of the two preceding streams they had passed. From its channel, the route was very much diversified by hills and plains. Four miles beyond the Ovens, they ascended a range coming from the Alpine Chain. One of the snow-capped mountains now in sight was named the Buffalo. There was a fine level country to the westward, and to the south-west a high range. The grass had been recently burnt upon the plains, and the whole country was very dry; but they never wanted water as they were crossing the western spurs of the Alpine Chain, for there were numerous creeks and watercourses running down from them. Until the 1st of December, the diary of the explorers is but a succession of ascents and descents over ranges, and across creeks in the valleys.

The views they obtained from the hills showed them patches of open forest country scattered here and there, but the general aspect was mountainous. The stone of the hills was principally granite, forming into piles of boulders occasionally, which peeped above the scrub with fantastic singularity at almost every hill. There were signs of natives in abundance, but none were seen at first. On the 2nd December they came to a meadow, watered by a creek, which afforded a much better kind of travelling than any they had been accustomed to

hitherto; but they could not go far through it, because the natives fired the grass in front, and they were obliged to camp. When the fire had swept out of their track, they noticed a range of high mountains before them, with a gap visible to the south-east, which, apparently, offered a favourable passage. Towards this they directed their course. Having ascended the ranges, the country improved considerably as they advanced, though it had that blackened, smoky, wintry appearance which no one can realize who has not seen the effect of a bush fire in Australia.

On the 3rd, they came upon another river, with beautiful grassy woodland country upon its sides. This was named the Hovell; but it had been previously named the Goulburn by Mr. Hume, and that name it now retains. It was crossed by the explorers on a natural bridge, in the shape of a large tree, which lay from bank to bank. The banks were very steep, and about twelve feet high. As usual, this stream was surrounded by many creeks and marshes; and then another range succeeded, amid agreeable and picturesque country, with good soil and grass, very much baked and parched by the dry weather. A somewhat lofty range was visible on the further side of the plains, about twenty miles away; and in going to it they crossed another stream, smaller than the Goulburn, and very muddy. It was called the Muddy Creek. One would think that such simple names were a great improvement on the old system of geographical nomenclature, but, unfortunately, the greater the simplicity the greater the confusion. There are no less than a dozen Muddy Creeks in Australia, and as for Emu Creeks, Reedy Lagoons, and Mounts Misery, they can be counted by dozens.

The explorers encamped one day by the Muddy Creek, because the weather was so very oppressive and hot. There was a range on the further side, and when they crossed this they had some difficulty in finding water. There were plenty of stream beds, but all, without exception, dry. The country was intricate and broken, with very little good land, except to the west-

ward, which was slightly better. Fortunately, some water was found, and a larger supply in King Parrot Creek, a little distance beyond.*

Beyond King Parrot Creek, they ascended a very high stony range; and when they had arrived at its summit they found, to their great disappointment, that they had to descend again on the south-west side, as there was no connecting ridge between it and another range still higher, which lay directly in advance. They had a good deal of trouble in getting down, and still more in getting up again, but at last they reached the top. Here a new difficulty met them, more formidable indeed than any they had yet encountered. They were stopped by a scrub so dense that they could scarcely see ten yards before them. Retreat was out of the question, after all they had accomplished hitherto, so they set resolutely to cut a road for themselves through the trees. While doing so, night overtook them, and they had to camp where they were, without grass or water. Their bed might have been pleasant enough but for the land leeches, which insinuated themselves into every article of wearing apparel, and caused very serious inconvenience to the explorers. Next day they gave up the idea of taking cattle further on this road. They returned to King Parrot Creek, and Messrs. Hovell and Hume resolved to proceed on alone to look for a passage through the ranges. They could not hope, however, to continue their journey much further, because they had only five weeks' rations left; but if they soon got a passage through the range they hoped to travel to the south-west for seven days more at least, and, on their return, to trace the further course of the Goulburn.

Accordingly, on the 9th, Messrs. Hovell and Hume started, with four days' rations of flour, tea, and sugar. They commenced ascending the mountain, which was named Mount Disappointment, and when the summit

* This creek was named after a beautiful parrot which was then seen for the first time. It is a bird of magnificent plumage, with crimson feathers on the body, and blue wings, both of gorgeous hue; and no other colour except a little black. The name, King Parrot, is variously applied to several birds in different parts of Australia; the one described is common.

was reached, tried to descend on the west side. For two hours they were employed in scrambling on their hands and knees over bushes and rocks, halting at last near a spring, very much exhausted by their exertions. When they renewed their journey, they met with a new and painful obstacle. This was the cutting grass, a plant with leaves four or five feet high and an inch and a half broad, with edges so finely sharpened as to inflict a severe wound by even rubbing against them. This settled the attempt of the explorers in that direction. Uncertain of the road, fatigued, lacerated, and their clothes torn, they became at length quite unable to proceed, and therefore returned to their camp on the creek.

The whole party now moved in a more northerly direction along King Parrot Creek, to try by this means to escape the range. On the 11th they were turned back for a time, because the country all round was on fire: the flaming scrub was more than they dare think of facing. On the 12th, however, they came again to the range, and ascended at a point a good deal to the north of Mount Disappointment. This was the proper route at last. After a march of eighteen miles, they came to a country of more promising appearance, and they camped that night on a watercourse, named Sunday Creek. They were not, however, quite done with the ranges; they had to cross several more. The last appeared to be the dividing chain, and was named the Jullian Range, after a friend of Mr. Hovell.

When they had crossed this range, it seemed as if all their climbing difficulties were over for a time, and they were able to proceed next day twenty miles in a sourtherly direction. They were now approaching the level lands round Port Phillip. The first part of their journey was through meadow land, while to the southward the country appeared level, but interspersed here and there with hills of a conical form. The soil was excellent. From a hill, named Bland's Mount, they had a long search for water, which was obtained at last by digging. A mountain, near where the well was sunk, was called Mount Hodometer, from the circum-

stance of an instrument of that description having been broken there. From this hill, alternate plains and forest were seen, extending as far as the eye could reach, forming a most beautiful view of swelling downs, with clothed trees, and gentle hills, looking, amid the gorgeous hues of sunset, like a lovely and deserted paradise.

The whole country seemed suffering severely from the aridity of the season, and the explorers had much to endure in consequence. They found a small quantity of water in a creek, running to the southward, which they named Relief Creek. Four miles beyond this they came to another southerly stream, named Broughton's Creek. The waters were not running, but the banks were from fifty to sixty feet high, showing it to be liable to great floods. From this they travelled across extensive plains, on which there was scarcely a tree. At twenty miles, they came upon a river with splendid country upon its banks. Leaving it next day, on their usual south-west course, they saw before them a strange appearance on the level horizon, which at first they took to be burning grass. It was the sea. With great joy they altered their course to the southward, and then travelled some distance along the sea-shore. The country near the beach was a splendid plain, between what is known as the harbours of Geelong and the Werribee, a river which Mr. Hume had named the Arndell. A great change has come upon the place since then, though only forty years ago. The plains are still there, and the river, and the sea, but across the track of the explorers, amid that solitary plain, a railway now runs, and the lonely hills often re-echo with the shrill steam-whistle. There are townships, too, scattered here, and pretty villas for retiring settlers, under the shade of the Youyang and Anake hills. The sea could no longer be mistaken; its surface is covered with many large ships of different nations, which sail to and fro over the waves which seemed so lovely to Mr. Hume as he gazed across them. From the top of Youyang, Hume gazed upon as fair a scene as ever met the sight of an explorer, but lonely as the grave.

Barely forty years after, I have enjoyed the same view; but it was a thing of life. At the opposite extremities of the plain were two large and populous cities, looking, in the clear atmosphere of Australia, by far too important and extensive to be the work of two hundred years. Could any one have told Hume what a future he was thus preparing for the place he would indeed have been proud of the position in which his discoveries that day had placed him.

On the 17th, they proceeded in a direction about north-north-west, and at four miles, arrived at a stream, named Kennedy's Creek. This was afterwards found to be a short chain of ponds. The party rested here, and this was their furthest point, for they intended to commence their return next day. Some natives were seen, but not very peaceably inclined. They tried, on two occasions, to surprise and spear some of the men; but eventually they were induced to lay down their arms and come to the camp. The explorers were soon tired of them, for they could give but little information, and they were inquisitive, troublesome, and great thieves. Messrs. Hovell and Hume had been desirous of taking their horses, to examine the country, but the conduct of these people, and the great number of them, made them think it very unsafe to separate the party. Messrs. Hovell and Hume then each marked a tree with their initials, at a place about two miles from the beach, and then they returned. The observations made by them, about a place which has since become so famous, were very few. They remarked that the plains were splendid in quality, and varied with ridges of volcanic rock. Hume had no doubt that they had seen Port Phillip, and Hovell maintained that it was Western Port, and for a long time it was considered uncertain what part of the coast they had seen.

On the 18th December, they commenced their return, keeping to their outward tracks within a mile or so. They crossed the Goulburn, twenty miles below their outward route, where the river was deep, and seventy yards wide, but without any perceptible current. They easily found a ford to cross it. The whole country

to the west of their route, from Hume's Pass as far as the Hovell, consisted of a broken surface, and beyond, there were ranges of considerable elevation. On the 1st January, they had to commence making forced marches, as their provisions were nearly exhausted. On the 8th, the last were served out, and this consisted of no more than six pounds of flour to each man, with one hundred and fifty miles of uninhabited country still before them. They managed, however, to eke out this small supply with the aid of fish caught in the rivers, and by shooting a kangaroo from time to time; so that altogether they were not badly off, if their position is compared with that of other explorers. When they returned to where they had left the cart, everything was found in good order, and the supplies of salt meat untouched. This was all the more singular, as there was evidence that the natives had been there, and had cut a piece out of the tarpaulin. The cattle were very much exhausted, but they managed to bring the cart along, and after an absence of sixteen weeks the party arrived at Mr. Hume's station, Lake George, on the 18th January. Their expedition was, without doubt, one of the most important made in Australia, as far as the value of the country discovered is concerned. The New South Wales Government fully appreciated this, and Messrs. Hume and Hovell were both rewarded by a grant of land of twelve hundred acres each.

Owing to the promising description of Geelong given by the explorers, a settlement was made by the Government at Western Port. It was never either successful or even populous, and was soon afterwards withdrawn by orders of the home Government. Shortly afterwards, Mr. Hovell made an extensive examination of the country in the immediate vicinity. He passed between Bass's and Wright's River, where he found excellent land. He then tried to cross the immense swamp to the north of the port, but found it quite impassable. He kept on his journey, however, until he arrived at that part of Port Phillip where they had arrived on the previous journey, but then were obliged to turn back.

CHAPTER XVI.

CUNNINGHAM'S DISCOVERIES.

Cunningham's discoveries—Oxley discovers the Brisbane River—Cunningham discovers the Darling Downs—The colony of Western Australia established — Consequent explorations — Stirling — Roe — Preston — Dale — Wilson—Hilton—Bannister—Moore, &c.—Visitors to the South Coast.

THE journey recorded in the last chapter was, as it were, a sequel to the discoveries made by Oxley to the south-west of the Blue Mountains. His journey to the north-west had not been followed up; and though the Liverpool Plains had been described as one of the most fertile tracts in New South Wales, no path to them had been discovered except over the precipitous chasms of the coast range. Yet it was easily seen that a level road ought to exist between Bathurst and the western slopes of the mountains; but six years had elapsed and nothing was done. A distinguished botanist, named Allan Cunningham, who was employed in scientific researches on behalf of the home Government, had made some discoveries to the north of Bathurst. He had reached a moderate-sized river, flowing down from the east side of the range, about sixty miles from the settlement. He had met with no difficulty in proceeding thus far, as the intermediate country consisted of low forest hills, swampy valleys, and small watercourses. hemmed in to the east by the rugged Blue Mountains. This success encouraged him to try a longer journey. He took with him, from Bathurst, five pack-horses and five men, with provisions for ten weeks, and on the 15th April, 1823, he started, intending to explore from the Cudgeegong River as far as the Liverpool Plains.

On reaching the stream above named, Mr. Cunningham explored it for some distance to the eastward, as far as the rocky hills which lined its bank would permit him. The Cudgeegong is a mere mountain stream, and seldom running. In its upper part it is a chain of picturesque water-holes, whose connecting channel is wholly choked up with reeds. Beyond this, Cunningham found that it flowed through extensive and open bare plains, with a uniform width of twelve yards, well marked by the dense growth of reeds. The plains were several miles in length, well covered with grass, growing on a rich, black soil. It was only a year since the Cudgeegong had been discovered, and yet the explorers found that the plains were already occupied by the herds of an enterprising squatter. Cunningham now struck to the northward. He descended into a grassy valley, and for a long time subsequently his journey was over a succession of wet valleys and dividing ridges. The general disposition of these ridges rendered the journey very fatiguing, especially as the ascents were exceedingly steep, rocky, and difficult. On the 30th, their progress was nearly stopped by these obstacles. One of the ranges, whose slope was a dense scrub of honeysuckle, was broken into very stony, abrupt precipices. Perpendicular ridges, faced with rock, hung over ravines of considerable depth, and occupied the country from north to south-east. By dint of much labour he attained the summit of a grassy range to the west. From this he could see a country of frightful irregularity to the eastward, and quite close to them. To the north, however, the view was much more consoling. It extended forty or fifty miles over a very promising land, though slightly hilly. It terminated at the base of a range of mountains lying east and west. This, Cunningham believed was the southern boundary of the Liverpool Plains. He had heard of this range before. Lieutenant Lawson, one of the discoverers of the pass across the Blue Mountains, had reached its base on the preceding year, and had considered them to be quite impassable, and lying considerably to the north of the plains. Cunningham

thought differently, and it was his intention now to satisfy himself on the matter.

He continued onward over the fertile tract in front. The ranges obliged him at first to keep along their base to the west, over low, grassy hills and vales, thinly timbered with eucalyptus. Suddenly the country became open and very rich, with the surface nearly level, slightly wooded, and declining to the north-west. The explorers went in this direction for five miles. They would willingly have followed it further, but that their course had been already too much to the west, so they struck north into a rocky, sterile range of bare hills, with small creeks draining to the westward, lined with a thick honeysuckle scrub. This difficult kind of travelling lasted until the 6th May, when they descended to a tract of good country, watered by a stream, whose winding channel could be traced by the particularly dark verdure of the swamp-oak (*Casuarina paludosa*) on its banks several miles in a north-east direction. This small river had been discovered by Lieutenant Lawson, and named the Goulburn. Its channel was sixty yards wide, with watermarks twelve feet above the level of the small stream which was then running, amid a forest of reeds, towards the south-east. It evidently took its rise in the south face of the mountain ranges, and watered some beautiful open grazing country upon its banks. It consisted of clear green levels, or small plains, with grassy hills of the most easy acclivity, bounded by ridges of forest land, thinly clothed with timber.

Leaving the Goulburn River (now called Morul Creek), their course to the north-east led them over a spur from the range, with another river like the Goulburn. This stream had also been discovered by Lieutenant Lawson, and named the Wemyss. The explorers continued along the river until they reached the broken narrow valleys of its sources. They halted then, and Mr. Cunningham went on to the range to look for some available road, and to ascertain whether the Liverpool Plains were visible upon the north side of the hills. It was with no small difficulty that he penetrated into the centre of this formidable barrier. He crossed nu-

merous streamlets proceeding from steep walled ravines around him forming foaming mountain rivulets. The summit of Mount M'Arthur was at last reached, and there a beautiful view rewarded all his labours. The country to the south-west was open plains, and so also was that to the south-east. Between them there were grassy spots, like green gems set in a sea of dark brown woodland, dotted over with blacker looking clumps of trees. To the north the scene was far more encouraging. There was a most extensive view of plains, which, from the dry colour of the grass, and absence of timber, one might have supposed to be a desert. The greater body of this open space lay to the north-north-west, from which narrow strips of white ran into the timber here and there upon their edges, almost like a tidal sea. A few detached mounds of a conical or rounded figure were scattered on the greater main patches of plain, beyond which the level continued until it was lost in the haze. The rock of the range was a compact basalt, disposed in cubical masses.

Although there appeared no difficulty in passing along the winding declivities of the northern face of the mountains, the ascent from the encampment had been so steep and precipitous, as to preclude all hopes of taking the pack-horses over. To the east the ranges looked lower, and Cunningham resolved to trace the south side in that direction in search of a pass. After pursuing an easterly course for five days, during which they managed to travel over thirty-five miles of very severe hilly ground, all progress was stopped by the mountain ranges. The lateral spurs had become bluff perpendicular rocks, which formed a chain of deep precipitous ravines. The journey was, of course, one of a very arduous kind, because it lay at right angles to the lateral chain of mountains. Yet it led to some important discoveries. From Morul Creek they met with no less than nineteen creeks, all of which had a south-east course into the open country, and extensive flood marks on their banks.

Having failed in their attempts eastward, Cunningham was determined to try to the westward. He

descended south to the open forest, until he attained such a distance from the lateral spurs as enabled him to travel with ease and despatch. They reached the Wemyss three weeks after they had first forded it, and three days subsequently came back to their camp upon Morul Creek. The provisions were now considerably reduced, and so were the men and horses, but, nevertheless, Cunningham was determined to employ seven days more in exploring in a north-westerly direction, where the blackened ranges seemed to extend in an almost unbroken line.

On the 2nd June, they started on their new route over a rising open forest, but observing upon an advance of a mile a most evident break of the main ranges to the north, they were ordered to alter their course in that direction. This led them up a narrow, but rich valley, to an irregular series of lofty mountain ranges, peeping over one another as far as the eye could see. They were then obliged to commence climbing again. After a laborious journey, not exceeding seven miles, their progress was stopped by a narrow deep ravine. From this point they could see the country from east to north-west, and it was nothing but a collection of bold lofty ranges, in a vast series, one behind another, terminating in steep precipitous heads, which overhung deep yawning glens and sharp rocky ravines. Cunningham almost gave up all hope at this prospect. The country seemed quite closed to the westward, and he determined to quit its blackened crags altogether. There was only one direction untried, and that was the south-west. There was an open valley in that direction, and it was thought that something better might be seen to the northward from thence. They descended to it through an open grazing forest. It was in sight of another bold, heavy lateral range bounding the valley, which was more promising than any recess they had yet explored. But the valley did not continue open for long. It soon became intricate and winding, with high precipices on each side. In despair, Cunningham ascended the range to see its further course. The view overwhelmed him with joy and surprise. It was a pass,

and they were on a fair and quite practicable road to the Liverpool Plains.

Upon proceeding to examine it, he found that from the level of the valley the ascent was gentle and gradual to the highest part of the gap. The declivity on the northern side, although less moderate, was not bad travelling, and only a mile from the wooded country at its base. This was watered by rivulets which ran northwards. The plains were seen from the mountain to be terminated to the north by another range running east and west. Cunningham did not go further than this gap, which, for obvious reasons, he named Pandora's Pass. From that point he returned.

In going back to the Cudgeegong, the explorers kept a much more westerly course along the base of the range, which now took an extensive sweep to the southwards. The country in that direction was like all the higher slopes of the western side of the tableland, fertile in patches of copse, well watered plains, and exceedingly boggy in wet weather. The rains were very heavy in the latter part of their journey, and they suffered inconvenience accordingly; sometimes being delayed for hours in crossing half a mile of ground. On the 27th June, they arrived at Bathurst, where they learned that rain had fallen during the previous six weeks upon the plains, and that the Macquarrie River had been flooded so considerably as to inundate the wheat lands on the upper bank—a circumstance never before witnessed since the establishment of the settlement. As a matter of course, as soon as it was known that an available route had been found to the Liverpool Plains, no time was lost by the colonists in making use of them for pastoral purposes.

In the same year, 1823, an expedition was sent out under the command of Lieutenant Oxley, to survey Port Curtis, Moreton Bay, and Port Bowen, with a view to report upon the best site for a convict establishment. He sailed in the *Mermaid* cutter—a vessel in which King had conducted his first three surveys—and after a tedious passage, anchored off Port Curtis on the 5th November. The examination of this harbour proved it to be a very

unfavourable place for a settlement—at least near the sea. South of Gatcombe Head, Oxley discovered a rapid mountain stream, which received the name of the Boyne. The entrance was nearly blocked up by sand-banks, but at high water there was about twelve feet in the channel. It was navigable for large boats about four miles further, and then the river became fresh and unnavigable. The country, on either shore, was low forest land of good quality, but very stony. The intermediate flats were composed of a good light sandy soil, apparently much flooded, since, between this point and the entrance, flood marks were observed twenty-five feet above the usual level. The stream was examined for twelve miles further, by dragging the whale-boat over the rapids which separated very picturesque reaches of water. Much rich soil was seen, and the hills, though very stony, were covered with grass. The floods appeared to rise here between forty or fifty feet, and all the flats bore marks of inundation. No fresh water was found except in the river, which, when confined within its natural banks, is in some places a furlong wide; the other banks were much wider, but both insufficient to afford a channel to the great accumulation of waters which drained at times from the neighbouring mountains. The hills were granite and blue slate, and the timber upon them was small and perfectly useless, with the exception of a few large gum trees on the flooded lands. Altogether, the report was unfavourable to Port Curtis as a settlement.

The next place examined was Moreton Bay. One river had been discovered in it by Captain Flinders, but the west shore had only been cursorily examined, and Oxley determined to trace that portion very carefully. The first day's survey terminated above Red Cliff Point. The shores thus far were low, and covered with mangroves, off which dreary unwholesome mud flats extended. Red Cliff Point was an exception. The water there was found to be deep within a short distance of the shore, and the country around an open forest. A few miles behind to the west the country became low and wet, but soon rising into

open forest hills. There was no want of permanent fresh water, though not in streams; and there was an inlet lined with good timber, in which the drooping branches of the graceful Moreton Bay pine (*Araucaria*) held a conspicuous place. When Oxley resumed his examination on the second day, he found the tide sweeping the vessel up a considerable opening. The muddiness of the water, and the abundance of fresh-water shells, showed that they were entering a large river, and in a few hours the water had become fresh, while no diminution had taken place in the size of the stream. At sunset they had proceeded twenty miles up the river, which was named after Sir Thomas Brisbane. The scenery was very beautiful. The banks were alternately hilly and level, but not flooded. The soil was of the finest description, supporting an abundance of timber of large size, among which a magnificent species of pine was in great abundance. Up to this point the river was navigable for vessels drawing sixteen feet of water, and the tide rose five feet during the night. The next day the vessel proceeded thirty miles further, the river still of uniform width, and clothed with even finer timber. The boat's crew were, however, so much exhausted by the work under a tropical sun, that Oxley could not proceed further than a point named Termination Hill; and even here the tide influence raised the water four feet six. This was seventy miles from the entrance. Near this Oxley ascended a hill to take a view of the country around before returning. The prospect was very extensive. From the south to the north-west the country declined considerably in elevation, and had the appearance of extended plains, formed of undulating, park-like hills and vales. The river could be traced for thirty or forty miles further, and it was conjectured to be navigable for boats for the whole of that distance. Oxley was of opinion that it would be found to drain the large central lake, which he considered he had discovered in 1818; but at any rate he asserted that it was the largest fresh-water river in New South Wales.

This discovery led to the occupation of Moreton Bay

as a penal settlement, and the town of Brisbane, which was then founded, now forms the capital of the new colony of Queensland. It should be mentioned that Oxley partly owed this discovery to information received from a shipwrecked mariner. While the *Mermaid* was at Port Curtis, a number of natives were seen, and among them a white man. The boat was immediately sent ashore, and while it approached the beach, the savages showed the greatest signs of joy, dancing and embracing the white man, who was nearly as wild as they. He was perfectly naked, and covered all over with white and red paint. He soon told his story. His name was Thomas Pamphlet. He had left Sydney on the 21st of the preceding March, with three others, in an open boat, intending to procure cedar from the Five Islands, about fifty miles south of Port Jackson. The boat was driven out to sea by a gale of wind, and the crew suffered fearfully. They were twenty-one days without water (!), and one of them died of thirst in the interval. At length the boat was wrecked upon Moreton Island. The three men had travelled to the place where Pamphlet was found, and about six weeks previously had left to prosecute their journey towards Sydney. Pamphlet had become so foot-sore, that he returned to the natives, who treated him with great kindness. Of the other two, one had not since been heard of, but the second was still with the tribe, and was afterwards recovered by Oxley. Both the survivors concurred in a story of a large river falling into the south end of Moreton Bay; and this led Oxley to make his discovery of the Brisbane. In addition to this information, Pamphlet was able to afford some interesting particulars about the customs of the natives, to whose kindness and hospitality he owed his life.

It was not now in the power of the New South Wales Government to continue exploration at the public expense, especially as the country already discovered was more than the colonists were able to use; and private individuals were continually adding to the area by small excursions beyond the limits of their runs. Still, the further exploration of the Brisbane River was

a subject on which everyone was anxious to know something more. In the absence of any expedition by sea, a journey from Liverpool Plains seemed the only way of tracing it on the land side ; but this plan, though the least expensive and the most desirable, was beyond the means of any private individual. Mr. A. Cunningham was still employed in Australia as botanical collector for the King's garden at Kew, but owing to other engagements, he was not able to attend to the matter until nearly three years had elapsed. In 1827, he equipped an expedition to explore for five months the unknown country on the west side of the Dividing Range between Pandora's Pass and Moreton Bay. By this means he hoped to add extensively to the knowledge of the Australian flora, and to settle the question of the sources of the Brisbane.

He started from the Upper Hunter on the 30th April, with a party of six men and eleven horses. After crossing the Dividing Range, at a mean elevation of 3080 feet, he pursued his journey northerly, through an uninteresting forest country, on the east side of the Liverpool Plains. This part of Australia had been recently exposed to a considerable drought, consequently the water was very scarce, and great difficulties were experienced in advancing. On the 11th May, they crossed, in latitude 31° 2′, Mr. Oxley's track made in 1818, in his journey easterly to Port Macquarrie. It being too rocky at this point to reach the Peel River, Mr. Cunningham continued to the north through a barren but densely timbered country, indifferently watered, and traversed by low arid ridges of argillaceous ironstone and clay slate. The land slowly rose as they advanced, and at forty miles a branch of the Peel was reached, whose height above the sea was 1900 feet. On the 19th May, they passed the 30th parallel of latitude, and then descended from stony hills to the head of a beautiful well-watered valley, affording abundance of the richest pasturage, and bounded on both sides by a bold and elevated rocky range. They followed this fertile vale about eleven miles northerly, to its termination at the left bank of a large river. This was

supposed to be the Peel. It seemed to drain a vast tract of rugged mountains to the eastward, evidently a part of the coast range, which still maintained its stern, repulsive character.

On quitting the river, the change from fertility to barrenness was very marked. Their course was northerly, between the 150th and 151st meridian of longitude, and a sandy desolate country, the very opposite of the smiling valley they had left. After fourteen miles, the land began to improve: there was less timber, and more grass, and occasionally open plains. The view was encumbered by thinly wooded ridges; but in latitude 29° 10′ all the hills to the west terminated, and a level open expanse burst upon the view. It dipped to the north-west, and in that direction the land was densely wooded; but to the north the country was more open, and all the high land was on the eastern side of their route. Hitherto they had suffered much for want of water, but here they rested at a rocky creek. When they continued their journey, the wooded land in advance was not found so pleasant or fertile a tract as at a distance it seemed. It was a sandy, barren waste of low ironbark and other scrub, which cost both men and horses great exertions to work their way through. In the midst of this scrub, Cunningham was agreeably surprised to find a large river, with fine still reaches in its bed.

The great weakness of the party prevented Cunningham from trying to force his way through the scrub any longer, so he turned to the eastward along the stream. But even with the aid of the river water, the journey was most distressing. They had to struggle through a desert waste for many miles, with thinly wooded sandstone hills at intervals. After a journey of eighty miles without grass, the country improved, and from a ridge which they reached on the 5th June, they saw open downs of vast extent before them, reaching to the base of a lofty range of mountains. These were named the Darling Downs. The great plain presented a wondrous extent of waving grass, whitened by the summer weather. The horizon was the only boundary, except

when in the misty distance the delicate outlines of the mountains could be traced. The numerous swelling undulations caused deep ponds of water to collect on the surface, which would have been otherwise arid. These were supported by streams from the high lands, which, when united, form tributaries to the Condamine River which flows through the centre of these downs, banked on every side by rich black soil. Cunningham observed, as he advanced, a succession of heavily timbered ridges in the north and north-west, extending to the eastern high range.

Some large patches of land to the north of the downs were named Peel's Plains, and beyond these the country was wooded. To the south and south-east the open tract received the name of Canning's Plains. Cunningham's most northern point was in lat. 28° 10′, long. 152° 7′, about seventy-five miles west of the penal settlement, which was by that time established at the new town of Brisbane. His camp was in a valley 1877 feet above the sea level, and from it he noticed a remarkable excavation in the eastern range, which seemed likely to afford a practicable passage to the eastward.

On the 10th June, they left their camp to return to the southward, and travelled over Canning's Plains. These were succeeded by an uninteresting forest of red gum, until, on the 18th, they reached the borders of a mountainous country of granite and quartz. The journey was now very fatiguing, from one treeless rocky ridge to another. At length they reached an open scrubby heath, with interspersed swamps and no trees. This was a tableland, gradually ascending as they travelled, until in lat. 28° 45′, lon. 151° 59′, they were on a plain nearly 3000 feet above the level of the sea. Notwithstanding this elevation, the view was very much circumscribed. Still higher ranges towered above them to the north-east.

On the 26th June, their progress to the south was arrested by a wild and frightful region, so rocky and precipitous, that it was useless to think of travelling across it. Reluctantly, they were obliged to steer to the westward, and with difficulty reached a lower level.

They then proceeded to the south-west, by such stages as the reduced state of the horses permitted, and reached the Dumaresque, fifty miles nearer to its sources, at an altitude of 1040 feet. On the 9th July, having traversed in a south-western direction a very rough and rocky country, they came back to their former track. They soon discovered that the first river they had met was not the Peel. It was formed by the junction of other streams from the eastward, and now was named the Gwydir. This made the third important stream discovered on this journey, the others being the Dumaresque, and the Barwon or Upper Darling, which was crossed on the Darling Downs.

To the south of the Dumaresque they met with a series of elevated rocky ridges, considerably more than 1000 feet high. They were grassy, and timbered with gum trees of the usual description. At the close of the second day, after leaving the Dumaresque, they had traversed ranges which showed them a level wooded country extending to the Liverpool Plains. These were now visible at a distance of forty miles. After a severe march through a barren forest for thirty miles, they arrived at Barrow's Valley, discovered by Oxley. This, Cunningham thought, was occasionally laid under water by the Field's River, which they had met in the adjacent forest meandering to the north-west. Barrow's Valley contained gum trees of enormous size; and though this was on the west side of the range, the alluvial grounds seemed to produce the herbage of the Hawkesbury River. Beyond this the country was barren and sandy for twenty-seven miles, and not more than 900 feet above the sea level. It terminated on the north margin of the Liverpool Plains, which the explorers crossed for twenty-five miles without finding water, as the season had been extremely dry. On the 28th July, they recrossed the ranges at Pandora's Pass, and after an absence of thirteen weeks, during which they had travelled 800 miles, they reached a station on the Hunter.

The discovery of the Darling Downs was hailed by the colonists as of the utmost importance; but of course

it would be useless, comparatively, for a long time, unless some practicable route were found from Brisbane through the range. With such a road this fine tract of pastoral country would be only seventy miles from the nearest settlement, while at present it was over 400. The gap in the ranges, seen in the distance by Cunningham, seemed to be so promising, that he went the following year from Brisbane to explore it. He was entirely successful; in fact, the discovery of passes seems to have been his lucky point. The gap is a very remarkable one, having precipices of sandstone almost 4000 feet high on either side. It has required very little work to make it an available road, and is now the main line of communication between the Downs and Brisbane.

In the following year, 1829, he again made a voyage to Moreton Bay, to continue his botanical researches. In an excursion to the north-west he explored the Brisbane to its sources; and it need hardly be said he did not find that it came from a central lake. During six weeks he traced its principal branch through a diversified country as far as lat. 26° 52′, until it ended in a chain of very shallow stagnant ponds. The river originated on the east side of the Dividing Range; its chief sources being in the elevated lands, lying almost on the coast line, between the parallels of 26° and 27°. The main range continues to the north in an unbroken chain, so as to prevent a road being made from there into the interior, as the mean elevation is 4000 feet. Cunningham's Pass is the only opening between the parallels of 26° and 27°, or for nearly 250 miles.

We come now to that most important part of Australian exploration which commences with the names of Sturt and Mitchell. In order, however, not to interrupt their narratives, I mention now some explorations in Western Australia, and on the south coast, which took place about this time. In 1828, Captain Stirling, who had discovered Brisbane Downs or Maneiro Plains, was employed in H.M.S. *Success*, surveying the coast of Western Australia, from King George's Sound up to Swan River. While doing so he had many opportuni-

ties of seeing the interior, which he thought more highly of than any one has done since. His report led to the establishment of a colony at Swan River. Captain Stirling was appointed Lieut.-Governor, with a grant of 100,000 acres of land; Thomas Peel, Esq., one of the Commissioners, was to receive 250,000 acres, on condition of his taking out 400 emigrants. Under these circumstances a settlement was formed on the Swan, and Captain Stirling founded the town of Perth.

The first surveys in the neighbourhood of the new capital soon led to the discovery of other rivers besides the Swan; but the explorations did not tend very much to raise the estimation of the colonists for the land of their adoption. After what has been said about the physical geography of this portion of the coast, very little need be stated as to the nature of the soil. It is a level flat with a little limestone between the tableland and the sea; and the plateau is of the usual ferruginous sandstone. Many streams flow down from the higher ground, the most of which unite with the Swan. This river spreads out its tributaries in almost a semicircle from the mouth; but none of them are navigable, and very few contain permanent water. The river valleys are the only fertile soil of this colony, for the plateau from which they flow, though splendidly timbered, render it quite unfit for pastoral purposes, except in small patches. Before these facts were fully ascertained, a great deal of time and money had to be expended in exploration; for it will be easily seen that such a country was not a favourable field for geographical research. It would be impossible to particularize all the discoveries which were immediately consequent upon the settlement, especially as the material for the purpose is of the most scanty and meagre kind. A few names and dates are, in fact, all that can be procured on the subject, and even these are of very questionable authenticity.

Captain Bannister was the first explorer to find an overland route from Swan River to King George's Sound, where a settlement was formed almost as soon as that of Perth. The line of road lay across the

sources of many streams from the tableland, but not one was of importance, neither was the country good. In speaking thus of such an extensive line of country, no doubt many colonists of Western Australia will think the judgment more unfavourable than the facts warrant; but I take my statements from those who know the land well, and who have had an opportunity of comparing what they saw with more favoured regions on the east and south side of the continent. More than once I have heard old colonists from the west say that even the grassy country would be regarded as sandy heath in other colonies, but I make no such interpretation in speaking of the plains called grassy by the colonists themselves. It is, at least, a significant fact, that only a very small portion of the colony is available for stock, as much probably from want of grass as of water. Let it, however, be added that no colony has shown such energy in making efforts to overcome its geographical defects: no colony has been so constantly zealous on the subject of exploration, and among all explorers those of Western Australia undoubtedly take the first rank.

In 1829, a Mr. Wilson explored a great deal of the back country on the south coast, between the 117th and 118th meridian of longitude, and about the 35th of latitude. He started from the Hay, near its junction with Lake Mairet, and by travelling north-west he discovered the River Denmark. This he traced past Forth Falls to its junction with the Macquoid, or Kent River, and following up this to a rich valley, returned through well-grassed country to Parry's Inlet, a little to the west of where he set out.

In October, 1830, a Mr. Dale, whose name was very much connected with the early exploration of the colony, started on a journey to the east from the township of Kelmscott, on the Canning or Upper Swan. Passing Mount Dale, he journeyed over elevated country with few creeks, until he reached the River Avon, which was followed up past the site of the present town of York. Here again he went to the east, and discovered all the intervening country between the Avon and Mount Caroline, in about longitude 117° 29′. From this point

he went to the south, over elevated downs, clear of timber, and then again turned westward, passing the Avon, near Beverley, and returning upon his old tracks. During this journey he found a cave in the sandstone, with some remarkable drawings made in colours by the natives. Similar caverns have been since found. The drawings are symbolical, and amongst other things contain the red hand which is so often seen upon the Buddhist monuments in India. Others will be described is this work. In 1831, Sir James Stirling and Lieutenant Roe, (the former companion of King, and then and now the surveyor-general of the colony,) were occupied in H. M. S. *Sulphur*, in surveying the south coast. When near Irwin Inlet, Lieutenant Preston left the *Sulphur* in a boat, and proceeded towards Perth. A little beyond Point D'Entrecasteaux, the boat was wrecked, and he had to make his way on foot. He was thus able to ascertain how many, and what streams emptied on to the coast as far as Bass River. None of any importance were found.

The longest and most important surveys were made by Lieutenant Roe. He went a good deal to the east, on the summit of the tableland, discovering many salt lakes, which since have been found to form a marked feature of the upper portion of the plateau, which in other places is almost an unbroken scrub. It will seem from the manner in which these expeditions have been sketched, that they have not received that prominence which has been assigned to explorations in other parts of the continent. A glance at the map will show, however, that they are only slight contributions to the knowledge of Australian geography, and the whole were merely local particulars about a territory, the general features of which have been already sketched, and will often reappear in subsequent parts of these volumes. The names of Moore, Bunbury, Wilson, Collier, and Hilman are among those who principally explored all that was to be explored in the immediate neighbourhood of the Swan. Mr. Moore gave his name to an important stream which joined the Swan from the north; and with such trifling facts as this, all that remains of

the various expeditions amounts to a mere record of names.

The south coast was not without its occasional visitants since the first survey of Captain Flinders. Captain Dillon, the well known discoverer of the remains of La Pérouse, visited Port Lincoln and Encounter Bay. His object was commercial, and he remained in the neighbourhood three months. Captain Sutherland also visited Port Lincoln on a sealing voyage, in 1819. He remained at Kangaroo Island seven months, and gave a full report of his residence there. Richard Wooton, and Frederick Hamborg, one a steward and the other a mate of a sealing vessel, remained on this coast a short time. The evidence of the first was not important, but Hamborg states that he entered Spalding Cove, and found two streams of water. Captain Gould also visited the same portion of the coast in 1827 and 1828. It was not however until 1836 that a settlement was made at St. Vincent's Gulf, and in the meantime Kangaroo Island had become inhabited to some extent by runaway convicts and seamen. With these exceptions, the south coast remained as lonely and deserted as when found by the first explorations of Flinders and Baudin. The day was however drawing near when it was made the home of Europeans, for this the way was prepared by the discoveries of Sturt and Mitchell, which will now be narrated in the ensuing chapters.

CHAPTER XVII.

STURT DISCOVERS THE RIVER DARLING.

The Inland Lake theory—Sturt sent to explore the Macquarrie—Mount Harris—Is unable to trace the river—The Darling—Return to Mount Harris—Explores the Castlereagh—Return.

READERS must now take a retrospective glance at what the settlers of 1829 thought of Australia. Though discovery along the coast had nearly terminated, the interior was still an enigma. What little was known only served to increase the perplexity. Large rivers had been crossed. Whence they came was known; where they went was unknown. The coast explorations did not solve the difficulty. The mouth of a large river was a thing as yet unnoticed by any explorer. What then were the settlers to suppose? They imagined the neighbourhood of Sydney gave them a clue. The range of hills which bears the name of the Blue Mountains left but a narrow strip of land between themselves and the sea. Its greatest width is not over forty miles, but there are places where the mountains and the sea join. The range has no break in it, and, as already mentioned, operated as a great bar to the earlier explorations of the interior. These mountains, near as they are to the sea, act as a dividing range to the waters. Whatever falls on the eastern is carried, after a short course, to the sea. The rains of the western side go to the interior.

All the explorers who had sailed round the coast had spoken of it as high and bold in character. There were, it is true, low lands and sand-hills on the south-eastern coast, but there were, probably, ranges behind. Hume and Hovell had seen snowy mountains to the

south of them, on their overland journey to Port Phillip. The sea could be of no great distance from them further south, and an extensive drainage from them was observed.

Again, between Portland and Cape Jervis the coast was low enough, but the dark wooded summits, and a range immediately behind, and the isolated peaks of Mount Gambier, Mount Burr, Mount Leake, and Mount Schanck, showed that there was high land further in. The only real exception was the ninety miles' beach of the Coorong up to Encounter Bay. Had the exception been examined, it might have dissipated the dreams of explorers in those days. It contained the mouth of the River Murray. Flinders had examined the whole coast westward, including the great Australian Bight, and its unbroken line of high chalk cliffs. Now, the settlers argued this way :—The greater part of the drainage of this country falls inland. The coast, as far as it is known, is elevated. May it not be, then, that the interior of the continent is much depressed below the level of the coast, and this, forming a receptacle for the inland drainage, gives rise to a large central lake? It is needless to point out here how much the explorations of Oxley and Evans served to confirm this view. That most of the rivers terminated in reedy swamps seemed an ascertained fact. What Flinders had stated as his impressions of the Great Australian Bight was looked upon as another proof. He said he felt convinced that there was an inland sea inside that monotonous line of white cliffs. Even at this distance, when exploration has gone so far, and geography has progressed so much, the theory does not seem so very unreasonable, when founded upon what then appeared to be such strong evidence. No wonder then that every trifling circumstance was interpreted in its favour. Every flight of birds in a westerly direction was carefully noted. The wildest fables of the natives were immediately believed, and when the same savages spoke of waters where they had crossed, and where large fish were found, meaning probably, Lake Alexandrina, the existence of the inland lake was thought to be clearly established. By no one

was this more firmly believed than by Captain Charles Sturt, of H.M. 39th Foot, probably one of the greatest of Australian explorers. From the time of his arrival in the colony he had taken a most earnest interest in everything connected with its geography. Once the inland lake theory had been broached, it became almost one of the problems of his life to solve. Years after, when many well-equipped expeditions had failed, and many valuable lives lost in the search, and though he himself had led a party further than any previous explorer, broken in health and spirits, he was obliged to leave the colony with the question still involved in doubt and mystery. He was a man of undoubted energy, and united in his character most of the qualities which an explorer should possess. Accurate in observation, of considerable scientific acquirements, and of unwearied application, he was possessed besides of talents of a high order, while his shrewdness in drawing conclusions gave his theories almost the certainty of facts. To these qualities he added personal courage, and untiring zeal, a consideration for others, and forgetfulness of self, which endeared him to his followers; while his modesty and unobtrusiveness threw a charm over his writings and exploits. We shall have occasion, in describing his journal, in 1845, to illustrate most of these qualities. His description may be concluded for the present by stating that he is justly regarded as one of the heroes of Australian history.

Sturt, then, warmly espoused the inland lake theory. From the year 1826 to the year 1828, the colony had been visited by seasons of unprecedented dryness. Then, if ever, seemed the time for deciding the questions which Oxley's incomplete discoveries had raised. It will be remembered that in following down the Macquarrie, which is now known to be a branch of the Darling, and the Lachlan a branch of the Murrumbidgee, Oxley had been stopped by these rivers terminating in immense reedy swamps. These were thought to be the commencement of the great inland lake; but the years in which Oxley made his explorations were ones in which the rains had been unusually heavy. It seemed

to Sturt that the question could not be held to be satisfactorily decided until the exploration had been repeated in a dry year. He, consequently, joined with the others in making strong representations to take advantage of what was then a most favourable season. As every fresh visit to the interior confirmed the news that the country was never more dry, the Government determined to fit out an expedition at once. Lieutenant-General Sir Ralph Darling was then governor of the colony. His choice of Captain Sturt to command an expedition reflects great credit on his judgment. In September, 1828, Sturt received orders from his Excellency to prepare for his journey; and it is from this period that the details of his discoveries commence.

On the 9th November, of the same year, the expedition was ready to start, and Captain Sturt waited on his Excellency to receive his final instructions. They were as follows:—He was to depart from Wellington Valley, and proceed to Mount Harris (discovered by Oxley), where he was to form a temporary depôt. From thence he was to explore the Macquarrie westward as far as he could, and, if possible, to its mouth. If stopped by any permanent sheet of water, he was to skirt it, and explore the land round it to the westward and southward, as far as possible. He was, at the same time, recommended not to risk the health of the men by remaining long in swampy country, nor to peril the success of the expedition by pushing forward further than the provisions for the return would warrant them. Failing of being able to reach the westward or southward, he was to try explorations in a northerly direction. Not, however, returning to any place on the coast if Wellington Valley should be nearer. There were the usual instructions about keeping a journal, intercourse with the natives, collecting of curiosities, &c.

On the 10th November, the expedition started. It consisted of Mr. Hamilton Hume, formerly spoken of as an explorer; two soldiers; and six convicts, of whom one was a shoe-smith, one a carpenter, one a harness-maker, and three stockmen. The expedition had been provided with a small boat, and a waggon for its con-

veyance, together with tents, blankets, pack-saddles, and all necessary stores, besides six months' provisions.

The stores were drawn by bullocks. The rendezvous was fixed at Wellington Valley, which was reached by the whole party at the end of the month. Here some delay occurred in training and breaking-in the bullocks, which time was employed by Captain Sturt in obtaining information from the settlers of the nature of the country beyond. All he could glean was but little. One stockman informed him that there was a lake about three days' journey to the left of the river. On the 7th December, the parties started. Leaving Wellington Valley, they kept along the Macquarrie. It will be seen by the map, that their starting-point was about one hundred and eighty miles north-west of Sydney. It was only inhabited by a few squatters, though now one of the most fertile agricultural districts in New South Wales.* Mr. Oxley has described with enthusiasm its land and scenery. His praises were more than deserved, for the land was rich, and the scenery beautiful.

Captain Sturt was unable to procure any native guides, except one or two, who agreed to show him as far as the cataracts, about half-way between the valley they had left and Mount Harris. At first, the journey was uninteresting enough: they merely wound backwards and forwards on what Sturt describes as the beautiful banks of the Macquarrie. After a few days' journey, they came upon a party of natives, who were much frightened at first, but soon established friendly intercourse with the explorers; and the poor savages were prevailed on to accompany them to the lake of which they had heard. The intervening country was now flat, and covered with dry marshes.

They found the lake to be a serpentine sheet of fresh water, about a mile in length, and about four hundred yards wide. There seemed to be no streams leading in or out of it; but it was full of fish, and pretty deep, though it was evidently much below its ordinary level. Accompanied by about twenty-three natives, Sturt pro-

* It was there that Hargreaves made his first discovery of gold in Australia, in 1851.

ceeded to recruit his provisions and rest his party by a little shooting and fishing. The next day, they went across again to the river, and reached the cataracts of the Macquarrie in the evening. Here the small quantity of water passing through the falls excited the attention of the leader. Whatever might have happened to Oxley, there seemed no fear of this expedition, at least, being stopped by excessive floods. The barometer gave the cataract a height of six hundred and eighty feet above the level of the sea, and the latitude was found to be 31° 50′, long. 148° 3′.

The lake they had left was called by the natives Lake Buddah. From this point the party journeyed on to Mount Harris, sometimes accompanied by numbers of natives. They noticed on their way that the banks of the river became narrower and the quantity of water smaller. Yet the country seemed to be very much subject to inundations. On the 22nd they reached Mount Forster, the highest summit of Mount Harris. The river from the elevation presented an unbroken horizon of dark forest, except to the eastward, where the Arbuthnot ranges loomed in the distance. One thing, however, was certain—they were not likely to be stopped by an inundation this time. When Mr. Oxley had visited this spot, ten years before (he had been buried a week before Sturt left Sydney), the country around was one sheet of water. Now, however, an interminable forest of reeds occupied its place. They attempted to push through this, but a couple of days' hard labour obliged them to desist. Here Captain Sturt determined on exploring the river in a boat. He divided the party. Mr. Hume was directed to explore the edge of the marsh to the northward, while he, accompanied by two men, attempted to follow down the channel of the Macquarrie. He was doomed to be disappointed. After some few miles, the boat suddenly grounded in a forest of reeds, and two insignificant creeks was all that marked the further progress of the river. On returning to the rendezvous, Mr. Hume reported the discovery of a serpentine sheet of water about twelve miles to the northward. This was evi-

dently the bed of the lost river. They proceeded to it, and again found its progress stopped by a dry reedy marsh. This was the third marsh they had met with since leaving Mount Harris.

Captain Sturt now tried to penetrate to the north-west with two men, but he returned in six days, after passing over a barren, inhospitable country, having failed to find any permanent stream of water. They therefore moved up to a chain of ponds four miles to the eastward; Mr. Hume, in the meantime, had made a circuit to find the Castlereagh River, but had not succeeded. They were completely at a loss to know what to do. Before proceeding further, it became necessary to know whether a request which they had sent by two of the party, for a depôt of provisions to be sent to Mount Harris, had been complied with. Sturt rode back to the latter place, and finding no one, nailed a paper to a tree, stating that water was very scarce and their provisions running short. He now, by a second journey, ascertained beyond a doubt that the course of the Macquarrie was an extensive swamp, about twenty-five miles west of Mount Harris.

Having fully fulfilled the first portion of his instructions, he determined to push in a north-westerly direction for the interior. On the 13th January, 1829, they again started, keeping along the banks of some small creeks where the water was plentiful. On the 17th they encamped under New Year's Range, which is the first elevation west of Mount Harris. From the summit of this Sturt thought he observed some water, and having found it ten miles further west, they moved up to it on the 18th. New Year's Range is a row of five hills, elevated scarcely three hundred feet above the plains, in long. 146° 32′, lat. 30° 21′. They called the water in which they were now encamped New Year's Creek. As it took too easterly a course, they struck to the west, to a hill they had named Oxley's Tableland. From this, Sturt started again, with one companion, for some elevations on the south-west, named by him Durban's Group. He found them to consist of a fine range of hills, of sandstone formation, eight or nine miles

long, covered with excellent grass, but no water. He returned to the camp. There remained nothing now for them but to return in a north-easterly direction to New Year's Creek, and try to penetrate further north by the assistance of its water.

After a difficult and perilous journey, they reached its bed, so much widened in extent as to be scarcely navigable even when subject to great floods; but it was quite dry. Their position was very critical. Tired as the men were, they found, after a long search, a pond which satisfied the wants of the party. Buoyed up by hope, they continued to explore the creek, and at last were gratified by finding that it had emptied itself into a noble river; and a broad sheet of water, covered with numerous wild-fowl, expanded before the delighted gaze of the explorers. They steered towards it, and the result is best described in Sturt's own words:—"Its banks were too precipitous to allow of our watering the cattle, but the men eagerly descended to quench their thirst, which a powerful sun had contributed to increase; nor shall I ever forget the cry of amazement that followed their doing so, or the look of terror and disappointment with which they called out to inform me that the water was so salt as to be unfit to drink. This was, indeed, too true. On tasting it I found it extremely nauseous, and strongly impregnated with salt, being apparently a mixture of sea and fresh water. Whence this arose, whether from local causes or from a communication with some inland sea, I know not, but the discovery was certainly one for which I was not prepared. Our hopes were annihilated at the moment of their apparent realization. The cup of joy was dashed out of our hands before we had time to raise it to our lips. Notwithstanding this disappointment, we proceeded down the river, and halted at about five miles, being influenced by the goodness of the feed to provide for the cattle as well as circumstances would permit. They would not drink of the river water, but stood covered in it for many hours, having their noses alone exposed above the stream. Their condition gave me great uneasiness. It was evident they could not

long hold out under their excessive thirst, and unless we could procure some fresh water it would be impossible for us to continue our journey. On a close examination, the river appeared to be much below its ordinary level, and its current was scarcely perceptible. We placed sticks to ascertain if there was a rise or fall of tide, but could arrive at no satisfactory conclusion, although there was undoubtedly a current in it. Yet as I stood upon its banks at sunset, when not a breath of air existed to break the stillness of the waters below me, and saw their surface kept in constant agitation by the leaping of fish, I doubted whether the river could supply itself plentifully, and rather imagined that it owed much of its abundance, which the pelicans seemed to indicate was constant, to some mediterranean sea or other."

The place where Sturt struck the river was long. 145° 33′ east, latitude 29° 37′ south. After the terrible disappointment about the nature of the river, he was at a loss what to do. To remain where they were was impossible; to follow down a river whose stream was running, and carrying down only salt water, seemed quite hopeless. The immediate necessities of the men and cattle just then pressed more upon the attention than further exploration. Mr. Hume was, fortunately, that night able to terminate their apprehensions, by discovering a pool of fresh water not very far from their camp. This supplied their wants, and enabled them to push their exploration further down the stream, in the hope that the character of its waters might change. They wandered eighteen miles along its banks, encountering in their way numerous tribes of natives, who subsisted by fishing. They were kindly received by them, and allowed to pass unmolested. At the close of a wearisome day of travelling, Mr. Hume called Captain Sturt's attention to a bubbling rise of waters in the middle of the river which looked like a spring. They examined it, and found it salt as brine. It was very evident whence the waters of the river were derived, and all hope of finding them fresh was at an end. Sturt at one time thought when he came upon the salt water,

that he could not be far from the inland sea, in which every one at that time believed. He now thought differently, and his only care was to remove the party to a place of safety before the provisions should run short, or the water fail in their search. He, therefore, directed his men to move back to the water they had last left, while he and Mr. Hume made a final attempt to explore the river further. Two days' further journey convinced them that the character of the river did not alter as far as sixty miles below the place where they first reached it. Want of water compelled them to turn back, and having regained the party, directed them towards the camp and depôt at Mount Harris.

It was with the greatest regret that Sturt turned his steps from the river; but even had water been found, want of provisions would have prevented his further progress. On leaving, he named it the Darling, in honour of General Ralph Darling, at that time his Majesty's representative in New South Wales; uncle to Sir Charles Darling, present Governor of Victoria (1864).

They had but little time to lose in pushing back to Mount Harris. On their way they found the foremost streams of the Macquarrie very nearly dry. In one of the serpentine water-holes, the water was so low that the fishes' backs appeared above the level, and the crows were picking at them. There was, though very little, enough to satisfy the requirements of the party. When near Mount Harris the whole bush was seen to be on fire, and Sturt became alarmed that the blacks had overpowered the relief party, taken their provisions, and then fired the bush. They were relieved by finding, on the 23rd, a soldier and stockman in charge of everything necessary for their immediate wants.

After refitting, Captain Sturt thought to cut the Darling at a point further south, but a slight investigation of the country in that direction induced him to abandon the project. There was nothing left but to strike in a northerly direction for the previously discovered river Castlereagh, and to try, with the help of its waters, to cut the Darling further north. On the

9th of March they started; on the 10th they reached the Castlereagh, but its bed was dry. A small pond was all they had to depend upon now. Further search, however, brought them to the end of a lagoon, on which they camped. They therefore followed up the bed of the Castlereagh, until finding it dry they struck off to a creek to the west, called Morrisset's Chain of Ponds. This provided them with abundance of water until the 29th, when, to their surprise and chagrin, they again struck upon the salt waters of the Darling.

It required but one glance to tell Sturt that he was again upon the Darling. Though ninety miles nearer to its sources, it preserved the same character. The banks were still high and grassy, as if they flanked a much more important drainage. The reaches were full and deep, and well stocked with fish. Worse than all, the waters were still salt and undrinkable. In fact, this stream was in every way an obstacle. It was too wide to be easily crossed, and the character of its waters did not admit of its being followed down. The only other alternative left was to turn back. This Sturt was obliged to do, but it was very disheartening. To have found the interior of the continent a marsh was bad enough, but to have found it a desert, watered only by rivers as salt as brine, would proclaim to the world a wilderness in Australia, such as never had been heard of before.

Prior to leaving the river, Sturt went down to the junction of the Castlereagh, which was about half a mile away. There was a native village on the point of the two streams, and a few savages collected round the tents. They declined any communication with the explorers, but seemed not so terrified at them as others had shown themselves.

As a final attempt, Sturt tried to cross the Darling, and push to the northwards; but vast plains of frightful aridity soon stopped him. He might have succeeded better at another time; but this was a season of terrible drought, and he was obliged to turn back, with only enlarged notions of what dry seasons could cause near the tropics in Australia. The plains were almost as

bare as a board, and whatever grass had grown upon them was withered and broken into a sort of dust, which swept in clouds before the wind. The only vigorous vegetation was in the moist beds of the dry watercourses; but even here it was only the trees that were green, for the rushes and other lighter plants were quite withered away. "The cranes," says Sturt, "with outstretched necks, gasping for breath, searched the channels of the rivers for water in vain." He adds, that the native dogs were thin, but they ought not to have been, if the cranes were so exhausted.

There was nothing left for Sturt but to return to the depôt. This he did by following up a different creek, until he came to Mount Harris. He had only succeeded in finding that the Macquarrie and Castlereagh joined another large river; but this was a great deal, considering the state of the country. The problem therefore was, not where the Macquarrie, but where the Darling finally discharged its waters; so that the inland lake theory was not settled, but only deferred by these discoveries. The party reached Wellington Valley on the 21st April, after an absence of four months and two weeks. The whole of the country was found, as they returned, to be in a dreadful state for want of water. The natives were thin and emaciated, not from thirst, but from the absence of game, caused by the state of the herbage.

CHAPTER XVIII.

STURT TRACES DOWN THE MURRAY RIVER.

The Murrumbidgee—Junction of the Murray—Junction of the Lachlan and Darling—Hostility of the natives—Lake Alexandrina—The Murray Mouth—Great sufferings on the return—Captain Barker—Mount Lofty—Melancholy fate of Barker—Further explorations.

It now became a problem of the highest interest to discover where the waters of the Darling were emptied. Exploration, as we have seen, generally went by fits and starts in Australia; and now that a new aspect came over the inland lake theory, no one could rest until the rest of the story were told. The ultimate fate of the Darling was the great geographical puzzle, and it did not seem very easy to find it out. It had been proved that its waters could not be followed, but, as they had a southerly course, perhaps they could be reached below Sturt's most southerly point. But this was not an easy matter. A party could only reach so far by following some other river. But which one? The Lachlan terminated in a swamp, and the Murrumbidgee ran too far to the south to offer much chance of success. After some deliberation, it was determined to take the latter. It might not reach the Darling; but, at any rate, it was one of the great channels of drainage from the western watershed, about which nothing was known. It had not been ascertained where any of the western waters emptied; no matter which was explored first, the fate of one would surely give a clue to that of all the others.

In September, 1859, Sturt received the necessary instructions for a second descent into the interior, for

the purpose of tracing the Murrumbidgee, and all the rivers connected with it as far as possible. In the event of a failure in this object, it was hoped that the Darling might be reached by a north-west course from the point at which their progress was stopped. The expedition was provided with a boat and every requisite for exploration by water.

On the 25th, the party reached the Murrumbidgee. This was a very different stream from the Macquarrie. It was not like that river—a shallow meandering creek, between long, deep, smooth reaches, or lakes of placid water; neither did it resemble the Lachlan, which was more like a marsh than a river. It was a fine smooth, and deep-flowing mass of water, showing by its even and regular current that it would not cease to run until it had reached the ocean. Sturt followed it down on the banks at first. This was a journey of some difficulty. His party was continually obliged to cross and re-cross for the sake of obtaining level ground on which the drays could travel. The course of the stream was west-north-west, and it gradually increased in breadth and depth. The country also improved in appearance, and they met many parties of natives who gave them information about their route. They all agreed that the Murrumbidgee was a tributary to some larger river, which, further on, they would find coming from the south-east. On the 15th, they were approaching the meridian of longitude at which all the other rivers of the interior have been found to exhaust themselves. To Sturt's alarm, the channel now changed to some extent, and the banks became low and covered with reeds. Yet the stream rolled on. Unfortunately, the country through which it passed became a desert. There was absolutely no food for the cattle, while the soil was so sandy, that the animals sank knee-deep in it at every step. In the midst of this worthless country, the Lachlan River joined, or at least that which Sturt considered the Lachlan. The natives called it the Colare, and said that it came from the north-east. This was the direction of the Lachlan, but it was so different from the marshy stream described by Oxley, that, but for the

reeds, no one would have believed that it was the same.

On the 26th, they left the river to keep on better travelling ground for the cattle. In the afternoon, they tried to get back again, but the channel could not be found. Sturt and his men were, for a moment, under the belief that they had lost it altogether; but it had taken a bend in the meantime, and was not discovered until the evening. This little incident made an important change in Sturt's plans. It was useless to exhaust the cattle by following the windings of the stream, especially as the banks were now, in all respects, like the marshes of the Macquarrie. At first, he proposed to build a little skiff and explore some portion of the waters before proceeding further. But he soon saw that much time would be lost thus, so he suddenly decided on a course as energetic and vigorous as it was bold and daring. He resolved to build a small skiff, in which to carry his stores, and sending back the drays, to take six men with him in the whale-boat for the further exploration of the river. Seven days saw the whale-boat and skiff built, painted, and afloat upon the water. The stores were soon shipped, a mast and spar cut for the whale-boat; the return party were told off and directed to remain one week at the encampment before leaving for a higher part of the stream. All the preparations being completed, the hardy little band departed on their perilous journey. One cannot but admire Sturt's energy and promptitude. No sooner did appearances lead him to believe that they had come near to the junction of some large stream, than he took action immediately, and though the course he adopted was very hazardous, he courageously faced the danger. It relieved him very much, of course, to be independent of the drays; and who could help sharing their enthusiasm at finding that two oars were sufficient to send them leisurely down the stream: while Sturt sat in the stern making notes, and a man at the bows stood, gun in hand, ready for any game which appeared?

The boat party started on the 6th. It was all very easy at first, and no danger was apprehended. On the

banks there were no natives; in the waters there were no alligators; and who dreamt even of sunken dangers in the shape of logs, rocks, or shoals? On the second day, however, the skiff which they were towing went bump upon a snag and sank in twelve feet of water. This was unpleasant, for with the skiff, down had gone all, or nearly all, their stores. It was a long time before they got them up again; the water was so thick and muddy that they had to feel on the bottom with oars before they could get each separate article. Thus a day was lost, as well as a few valuable things which the natives stole. The savages managed to conceal themselves so carefully that they were not seen, and but for the fact of the articles being gone and certain sounds during the night, the things were so cleverly taken that their disappearance might have been attributed to magic.

With this exception, the expedition went on well enough. A good look-out was kept for snags, for there was little else to see. The country, or rather the sides of the river, became so flat and densely covered with reeds, that Sturt began to fear a termination as the stream of the Macquarrie had ended; but the waters were as plentiful as ever, so that there was no immediate ground for apprehension. Oxley could scarcely float his boat in the Macquarrie, and in these marshes one could float a seventy-four. But on the 13th of January, there really did seem cause for alarm; the stream became very narrow, rapid, and so blocked up with timber that its navigation became almost impossible. With difficulty, Sturt kept his course, every moment expecting that some obstacle would stop their progress entirely. Amid these logs and snags, a great many tributaries joined, and this perhaps explained how the wood came there. On the 14th, they were hurried down by the current, in danger of being swamped at every sunken log which lay across their track. There was no necessity to row now, for it was as much as the steersman could do to keep the boat's head steady, and prevent her broaching-to. At three o'clock, the man on the look-out said that they were ap-

proaching a junction, and almost immediately afterwards the boat shot forth into the placid, glassy waters of a broad and noble river. This was a great change for the better in their circumstances—snags and natives, all were forgotten, as they let the boat glide along the current and gazed with astonishment upon the scene before them. On either side rose banks some eighteen feet high, which prevented their seeing much of the country beyond; but the waters were transparent, and in peering through their limpid waves at the sandy bottom, or in looking forward to each succeeding reach as it unfolded new prospects before them, they found employment enough.

The rate of the current was nearly three miles an hour: there was little change in it for many days, except that it seemed to grow broader. Once only were any rapids met, and these were passed with some little difficulty. The few natives met with were troublesome at first, but eventually became more friendly, and even helped the explorers to get their boat over the rapids. No information could be got from them. Sturt tried to gather, whether they were near any large river coming from the north-east; but he could not make them understand: he had made up his mind that if the Darling continued its course from the point to which he had traced it, the junction with this fine stream would be met with before long. He called the main channel the Murray, after Sir George Murray,* at that time Secretary of State for the Colonies.

The junction of the Murray and Darling was now anxiously looked for, and at each succeeding turn of the stream Sturt renewed his anticipations of making this important discovery. Some natives who had followed them for some distance and had been rather more friendly than usual, left them secretly and suddenly on the night of the 22nd. This was scarcely remarked at the time, but was well remembered next day, when they saw the immense multitudes of savages assembled on the banks to stop their progress. However, they

* Subsequently Master of the Ordnance in Peel's Ministry, in 1834; but better known as the editor of the "Marlborough Despatches."—Died in 1847.

started in the morning, little suspecting any mischance; and as the day was fine and the wind fair, they were able for the first time to make use of their sail. At a bend of the river they suddenly came in sight of a particularly unpleasant prospect. There was a vast concourse of natives solemnly marshalled on the banks in battle array. They were armed with all the deadly instruments of their rude warfare; they were painted and bedaubed with the hideous pigments which they use to make their ugly features more ferocious and unearthly, and finally, they yelled in monotonous chorus of savage delight, as they saw the boat approach them. But it held on its course, nevertheless. Sturt fancied that his four friends might be amongst the crowd, and that he might yet make his peace. But the natives seemed determined to resist any attempt to land, and certainly, the explorers almost quailed as they came near their enemies. Some were marked with white paint on their ribs, legs, and arms, so as to look like skeletons; others were smeared with grease and yellow ochre, and all held their spears aloft quivering in the air, ready to hurl them when the boat came near. The scene was certainly very impressive. A dead silence, says Sturt, prevailed in the front ranks; but in the rear, the men and women were very clamorous. The latter seemed to have had a bucket of whitewash emptied on their heads.

Sturt was unwilling to shed their blood unless compelled, especially as the combat might be doubtful where the natives were almost forty to one; so he turned the boat's head down the stream. The savages were now worked to a fury of anger and disappointment. They yelled and jumped about in a frenzy, following the boat down and throwing their spears. Of course, the explorers did not mind all this as long as they could keep out of reach. At first that was easy enough; but the water soon shoaled, and they saw to their sorrow that they were approaching a sand bank which stretched half-way across the stream. To this the natives flocked in crowds, and several chiefs ran up to their middle in the water to get as near the boat as

possible. Sturt now saw that he must fire upon them. Directing three of the men to defend the boat while the others kept up the firing, he was just on the point of shooting the leader, when he was informed that another party of blacks had made their appearance on the other side of the river. They were only four; but these four made a most important diversion in favour of the boat's crew. They were running along at the top of their speed, and as soon as they reached the river they jumped in and swam across. They were the four savages who had left their camp secretly the night before. It appeared now that they had retained a grateful remembrance of their treatment, for one of them soon made his way to the other natives, and by blows and menaces put a stop to their hostile demonstrations.

This was a great relief, as may well be imagined; but what made it more pleasant, was the discovery that the sand-bank was caused by the junction of another large river. This was the Darling. Sturt guessed it at once, and he guessed right, though it was not believed at the time. He took his boat a short way up it, and then hoisting his flag gave three cheers, to the great astonishment of the sable spectators, who doubtless admired the flag; but thought their own yelling vastly superior to that of the crew. Ere they had recovered from their astonishment, the boat had swung round to the fair wind, and had soon left the natives behind, wondering what it all meant.

At their next camp the skiff was emptied and broken up: unfortunately for the explorers, it contained but little. The accident on the Murrumbidgee had spoilt all their salt provisions, so that they were not without misgivings as to their rations, should the expedition last much longer. But where were they going to? that was the question. As long as they had been upon the Murrumbidgee, their course had been to the south-west, so that they might have hoped to reach the sea: but since their entry on the waters of the Murray, their course had been nearly north-west—they were going towards the centre of the continent. How long

the river might last was uncertain. It was not however diminishing, for they had passed many tributary creeks since they had left the Darling, and two rivers from the north and south, named the Rufus and the Lindsay. For all they knew then, the Murray might take them to the inland sea, whose existence seemed now more probable than ever; or it might carry them right across the continent to the western coast. In any case, their provisions would not last much longer. They were already many hundred miles from Sydney, and still going north-west. It was a hazardous undertaking, but Sturt's courage held out. Day after day, the stream swept them further from home, until the latitude was to the south of the head of St. Vincent's Gulf: then the doubts of the party were relieved, and they could soon expect the end. Beyond all question, this large river must terminate on the south coast, and all were in feverish anxiety to see on what favoured part it would be. One thing damped their spirits a little: the country passed through was a perfect desert of sandy scrub. It was not alone for the sake of future colonists that they grieved at this, but in such a country it was useless to expect game, even in the widest sense in which famishing men apply the term. Altogether, their prospects were not agreeable: the men were much reduced; the natives were almost hostile; and to row back against the stream under such conditions, for so great a distance, was a great risk. Still Sturt kept on. Surely the decision and courage of such a man deserved more than the renown it obtained.

Thus the month of January passed. Towards the end of it, the country on either side of the river changed its character. It was bounded, sometimes on one side and sometimes on another, by high cliffs, forming precipices from one hundred and fifty to five hundred feet high. The rock was white, like chalk, and quite as soft. It was one mass of tertiary shells. Parts of these cliffs were very beautiful. A great many of the fossils—sometimes a whole precipice—was changed to selenite, which, while retaining all the varied forms and fanciful tracery of marine ornaments, was as clear as

crystal, and looked like fancy work in ice. When the setting sun shone full on the face of these cliffs, the red rays were reflected back off the crystalline facets into the dazzled gaze of the explorers, and made them imagine that they were in fairy land, and that palaces of diamonds were not quite things of fable.

On the 3rd February, the river took a direct course to the southward, and altered very much in appearance; it became broader and much longer in its reaches. The country on either side was very fertile. Sixty miles from the great southerly bend the stream was the third of a mile in width—a broad and noble sheet of water, the only one of its kind, alas! in all Australia. The waves which rolled up its centre were now a serious obstacle to the little boat, yet they were joyous signs to the crew, for they spoke of a clear path to the ocean. But the waters were still quite fresh. This was rather puzzling. Where was the sea? The river terminated in a beautiful lake, and on the western side its waters were shaded by the distant outlines of the Flinders Range. One high peak of this range was thought to be Mount Lofty, but this was a mistake. Mount Lofty was still far away. It was Mount Barker, called so from a melancholy incident, which will be just now mentioned.

Here then was a triumph for Sturt; he had traced the Murray to its mouth, and thus solved the question of all the western waters, from the Darling Downs to the Australian Alps. He knew by his latitude and longitude that he was close to Encounter Bay, where Flinders had met the French ships, and he could not doubt that this large lake had a fine outlet to the ocean. The waters soon became salt, as they steered across Lake Alexandrina; but a great disappointment awaited them. They ascertained, after a very slight examination, what might have been suspected from the occurrence of the lake, whose shallow waters rarely gave a much greater depth than six feet. There was no navigable outlet to the Murray. There was a channel on the further side, running to the south-west, which was obstructed by a large body of natives, and numerous

shoals. The natives were dispersed, but the shoals were too much for the boat, and Sturt was obliged to return, with a very unfavourable impression of the value of his great discovery. Bad as this was, his expedition had succeeded far better than he could have anticipated, and with a knowledge that he had done his duty and accomplished his task, he set out on his return. It was with no regret that he did so, for the country around the lake was not very attractive. At the mouth of the stream it was a mere coast of barren sand-hills, up to which the sea came in for a long distance, in immense lines of high, white-crested, sweeping breakers. No matter how calm and unruffled was the shallow lake; no matter if under the blue sky there was not a breeze sufficient to disturb the reflected image of the green banks, or the distant mountains; the hoarse roar of the surf was ever echoing along it, and the view of the foamy waves spoilt all the beauty of the rest of the scene. The sand, too, spoke ominously of the soil, and while it explained why the river was closed, it showed why no navigator had suspected its existence from the sea side.

On the 13th February, Sturt re-entered the river on his way homewards. The men were much exhausted, and their provisions very scanty indeed. Fortunately, the wind was fair, and they were enabled to use their sails. One singular feature at a return camp is worth recording. They stopped for the night at a native burial-ground, quite different from anything yet described in connection with the Australian savage, if it is to be regarded as a burial-ground. It was a portion of the bank, which was so full of human bones, that it must have been used as a place of sepulture for many years, and yet there was no mound on the surface above, or on the neighbouring trees, which would indicate a memorial of any kind. Could this have been a sepulchre, or was it not rather an alluvial deposit of bones brought down by the floods of the river? In any case, it is a pity that the matter has never been investigated further; for even if it only proved a native cemetery, it would be the only instance on record, of graves without

mound or heap of some kind, and therefore to be referred to some former part of native history.

The rest of the journey back is easily described. It was for the explorers a protracted course of suffering. They had nothing but flour left, and they could get no game, so that their diet ill fitted them for the exertion of pulling continually against the stream. It took a month for them to get back to the Murrumbidgee, and during the whole distance they were constantly harassed by the natives, who made many attempts to surprise and massacre them. Fortunately, bloodshed was avoided. Seventy-seven days after starting they reached the place where they had built their boat, having in the interim rowed at least two thousand miles. Here a terrible disappointment awaited them. They had expected all along that provisions would have been sent from Sydney to this point. The hope of this had buoyed them up amid all their fatigues. But the depôt was just as they had left it, and no one was there. The next rendezvous was two hundred miles away, and Sturt remembered with bitterness that he had told his companions that they need not come further down unless some extraordinary delay took place. It was useless therefore to expect them, so the boat proceeded onward. For seventeen days longer they pulled against the stream. The daily journeys became gradually shorter and shorter. No murmur, however, escaped the crew, as they sat in the boat, pale and emaciated, and pulled against the current. At night, in their tents, before sleeping, when Sturt's presence no longer controlled them, their sufferings would find an utterance. "I frequently," says Sturt, "heard them complain of great pain; and severe exhaustion. 'I must tell the captain,' some of them would say, 'that I can pull no more.'" To-morrow came, and they pulled on. At last, one of them became deranged, and the others fairly gave up. This was still ninety miles from the depôt, but they absolutely could not take the boat any further. Reluctantly they drew it on shore, and two of the strongest men were sent in advance, and the rest waited. For six days there was no sign of their return. The

last day's provisions had been served out, and then they thought of nothing but saving their lives. The specimens were buried in cases made of the whale-boat, and they resolved next day to follow in the track of their comrades. That next day, however, brought them the long-expected relief. This was the last of their trials, and exactly six months after leaving they were all safe back again in Sydney. A triumph, of course, awaited them there, and the story is still told as one of the glories of Australia, how six men ventured some thousands of miles, through a country infested by hostile savages, with no other conveyance than an open whale-boat.

When the results of the survey were known, it seemed very hard to believe that so large a river as the Murray had no other outlet than the one seen by Sturt. This was not ascertained with certainty, and the matter was considered an important point yet to be determined. Captain Collet Barker, of the 39th, had been employed at Port Raffles, on the northern coast, and then subsequently at King George's Sound. On that colony being united to Western Australia, he handed his command to Sir James Stirling, and repaired in a schooner to the mouth of the Murray. He arrived at the entrance of Gulf St. Vincent in April, 1831, and searched the east coast for some communication between Lake Alexandrina and the gulf. Of course, he found none. He then landed, in company with Mr. Kent, and ascended Mount Lofty. The beauty of the scenery surprised and delighted them. At first, they went over lightly timbered plains of red clay, all waving under a green crop of autumn grass. Before them the hills rose up in masses of black and green, the swelling mounds of the foreground being as verdant as emeralds, and rising behind to black ravines of dark forest. The explorers climbed Mount Lofty. It took them a long while to do so, for the summit was far back amid the ranges, but the view amply repaid them. There were the plains stretching out as a rich tract of pasturage, bordered by the gulf, which, from there, looked like a lake. To the north, hills faded into more distant eleva-

tions, until the horizon was lost in the red glow of the rising morning. Those plains were beautiful then in their solitude; they are beautiful now, though the thin lines of roads can be traced here and there, and the towns of Adelaide, Norwood, and Kensington lie like patches of fancy work upon them. After gazing with silent admiration at the scene, and noticing to the east the hill which Sturt had mistaken for Mount Lofty, they returned to their ship. They explored the gulf a little further, and then landed on a southern point, and crossed eastwards, towards Lake Alexandrina. At every step they were delighted with the richness of the country. It was hilly, but by no means barren. It was well timbered, but not a forest; and the valleys here and there between the ridges could not be surpassed for richness and verdure. When they reached the lake they made their way to the channel through which the Murray drained to the sea. Captain Barker thought that it was about a quarter of a mile wide, and he wished to swim across it, to take some bearings from a sand-hill on the other side. He was the only one of the party who could swim well enough for the purpose, so, notwithstanding the remonstrances of his followers, he stripped, and swam across, with his compass fastened to him. He was seen to ascend the sand-hill and go down towards the beach, and then his further course was unknown. Hour after hour his companions waited, but he did not return. Evening came, and still no signs of the captain. When night set in they got a terrible explanation of the cause of his absence. Native fires were seen all round the sand-hill which he had ascended. At once his party went back to the vessel for assistance, but his fate was beyond all aid.

With the aid of a native female, whose assistance they procured from Kangaroo Island, they were able to learn the sad particulars of his fate, but that was all. He had been seen by two natives, and wounded by a spear, and as he took to the water to avoid them, he was speared through the body in a dozen places. His death was happily a speedy one. And afterwards, the murderers said, they threw the body into the sea; but no

one who knows the horrible habits of these natives will believe that part of the story.

After this melancholy incident, Mr. Kent took the command of the expedition. He made some further exploration by returning up the valley of the Inman River, amid the Mount Lofty ranges, and then proceeded in the ship to Sydney. After this survey, no further hopes were entertained of the sea-mouth of the Murray.

CHAPTER XIX.

MITCHELL ON THE DARLING.

Barber's story—Mitchell's first expedition—The Peel River—The Nammoy—Bullabalakit—The Nundawar Range—The Darling—The Gwyder—Murder by the natives—Another expedition—The Bogan—The Darling—Attempt to explore it in a boat—Fort Bourke—Course of the Darling—Encounter with the natives—Return.

SHORTLY after Sturt's return, great desire for further exploration was manifested in Sydney, in consequence of the report of an escaped convict, who said he had followed a river from the back of Liverpool Plains, until it brought him to the north coast. The river, he said, was broad and navigable; it flowed through a level country with a dead current, and spread into frequent lakes. He found that it ultimately discharged itself into the sea; and though he was uncertain at what distance from its source, he was positive that he had never travelled to the south or west. He said further, that the natives called it the Kindur. There were one or two circumstances in this story which gave it an air of great probability; and as Sir Ralph Darling was then in Europe, Major Mitchell, the surveyor-general, applied to Sir Patrick Lindesay, the acting governor, for leave to conduct a party to test the truth of the convict Barber's statement. The major was under the impression that if a north-westerly flow existed on the east side of the continent, there must be a watershed between it and the southerly streams. Such a feature, he imagined, would render a passage to the interior very easy. This was a favourite idea of Mitchell's, from first to last, and indeed it was a geographical problem until very lately. No doubt the theory was a true one, but the mistake lay in

looking for the watershed too far to the south, when only small rivers were known upon the north coast. Walker's discoveries settled the point, and showed that the watershed existed many hundred miles to the north of the Liverpool Plains.

Major Mitchell started in November, 1831. He had a strong party, and seventeen horses, besides carts, and two canvas boats. On the 2nd December he arrived at Wingen, a burning mountain, but not a volcano. Its fire is probably derived from a combustion of the bituminous shales of which the mount is composed, and it occupies a space of small extent, but it has been burning as long as it has been known, and is a curious feature.

The furthest settlement at that time was on the Peel River, at the extremity of the Liverpool Plains. Here Mitchell was informed that the river flowed westward, and was soon joined by the Muluerindee, from the north coast. Before leaving in this direction, he repacked his stores, and finding that the tea and sugar were deficient, sent Mr. Finch, his assistant, back with six bullocks to the Hunter River, to obtain fresh supplies. He was to follow the party along a line of trees, which should be marked for the purpose. This arrangement proved a very fatal one, and marred the whole expedition.

They now travelled for two days in a westerly direction, and even sometimes to the south of west, meeting nothing except a few plants and fossiliferous rocks. On the second day they reached the Peel below its junction with the Muluerindee, and where they encamped the stream supplied them with abundance of fish, and the country plenty of game. From this point Mitchell saw that the Peel continued its course westward, over extensive and rich plains, and then through a gap in a range before them. The plain was destitute of trees, and very uneven. The soil was so deep that Mitchell dreaded the effects of rain upon it. The sequel showed that his fears were well founded.

When the range was passed, the view was clear to the west. Only two hills could be seen, and between

them a long train of lofty gum trees showed the course of the Nammoy. This was the stream Mitchell wanted, for it led to the north-west. He followed it for many days through mountainous but well-grassed plains, until he came in sight of a majestic chain of mountains to the westward. To reach these, Mitchell left the river. The mountains, which have since been found to be a continuation of Hardwicke's Range, were a truly grand chain of rocks and precipices. The beauty and loneliness of the mountain gorges and well-wooded valleys have been cleverly depicted by the major, who stood upon a lofty peak, and gazed in despair at the impenetrable nature of the obstacle before him. Sublimity and grandeur were, however, the only merits of the range. The lofty precipices of red trap rock were quite inaccessible. It took a long time to convince Mitchell of this, as he stood irresolutely peering into the vast recesses along which the sullen thunder was almost continually heard. At last, he turned back. Well-wooded and enticing as the valley seemed, the stormy rugged precipices of the summit repelled him.

He returned to the Nammoy, and made arrangements for a permanent encampment, while he explored the river in the canvas boat. Sending off one of the men with despatches, he commenced his boat voyage on the 29th. But a half-day's journey convinced him that the frail canvas boats were utterly unfit for a service of the kind, and unfortunately the experience was purchased by many losses, and a good deal of damage done to the provisions. The major now tried to follow the stream banks down along the course of the Nundawar Ranges. For two days they kept crossing spurs of the range with rivers between, all tributaries of the Nammoy, and then they entered on to a very extensive plain, which seemed boundless to the northward. They now left the river. Though there was but very little chance of Barber's great north-west river in such plains, yet their only chance was to keep to the northward along them, for as yet it was clear they were not out of reach of the southerly watershed. The plains were pleasant travelling enough, if the weather had not been so hot, and the

water so scarce. In other respects, there were no inconveniences, except a few small belts of scrub, by no means difficult to work through. The scenery was just what one might expect—sky and grass, with mountain summits like clouds on the edge of the horizon, and scattered belts of timber, like funeral processions, amidst the white herbage.

On the 9th, the features of the country suddenly altered, and it was evident that they were approaching a large river. On descending a very gentle slope, covered with long grass and fine gum trees, they came at last upon a stream much broader than the Nammoy. A moment's inspection confirmed Mitchell that it was not the Kindur, as described by Barber, but evidently the Gwyder of Cunningham. Instead, then, of finding the great north-west river, as they had been told they would, after crossing the range, they had found a comparatively small one flowing south of west. It was not much use trying to verify Barber's statements any further, so Mitchell determined to trace this stream down, and see where it led to. It was much like most of the streams in this part of the world. Rich banks clothed with gum trees, or a sandy channel, with *Acacia pendula*, were the only varieties in the stream. For twelve days it was followed down without anything very remarkable being discovered in connection with it, except that there was very barren land at no great distance on either side. Mitchell then struck to the northward, to get some idea of the nature of the country in that direction. It was only the same scenery over again, but without the river or any water at all, for two days. At the end of that time he reached another river, larger than any hitherto met—turbid, deep, and stocked with fish.

Well, was this the Kindur? Alas! no. There seemed very little question that it was the Karaula or Darling, discovered by Sturt. At all events, Mitchell resolved to explore it. While a boat was being built, he went to see what chance there was of sufficient water for navigation further down. A small party was at first sent to remove any immediate obstructions they

might find near; but the report they brought back was very unfavourable. The stream was nearly blocked up by overhanging trees and rocky shallows. Upon this intelligence, the major started, with six men, to explore the river by land for nine days. The country he passed through was very similar to what he had already seen. Low alluvial flats, much subject to inundation, thickly grassed, and very scrubby, without any elevations whatever, were the constant scenes on every side. On the 4th February they reached the Gwyder, and near its junction the Darling swelled into a noble reach as wide as the Thames at Putney, deep, and perfectly clear of fallen timber. But there could be no doubt of two things, and they were, that the river was the Darling, discovered by Sturt, and that it was quite impossible to navigate it even in a small boat.

It now only remained to Mitchell to proceed to the northward by crossing the Darling; but this he could not do until Mr. Finch arrived, because the rations of the party were too low to permit any further advance into the interior. They were obliged therefore to wait. In the meantime they had much intercourse with the natives, who were timid and shy, but very harmless in their disposition. They spoke a strange dialect, wore no clothes, and used the mogo or stone hatchet; but they had evidently seen white men before.

At last, Mr. Finch came. He brought nothing, however, but dismal news, which put an end to the progress of the expedition. In journeying up along Mitchell's track, he had been obliged to leave his two men in camp, while he searched for water; and when he returned he found that the camp had been surprised, the men murdered, and the cattle and stores taken away. This terminated Mitchell's hopes of exploring the country beyond the Darling. The party had now one more to support out of the slender stock of provisions. The season for rain was approaching, while they had behind two hundred miles of country liable to inundation, without a hill or a refuge in the whole distance, and the soil was likely to become impassable after a few days' rain. There was nothing, therefore,

for it but to retreat. On the 8th, they journeyed back to the Gwyder. Next day, about one hundred natives, whose tracks they noticed following those of Mr. Finch, came down to the camp, and became very troublesome; they followed for some days, making very impudent menaces, but nothing more. On the 12th, the party was in sight of the Nundawar Range again. By making a straight track across the plains, they cut off ten days' journey; but during this part of their travels the rain came down heavily, and the ground became such a sea of mud that all progress was stopped. When the weather cleared up a little, Mitchell went to the scene of the massacre, and performed the last sad offices on the remains of the unfortunate men. They had apparently been murdered in their sleep and their bodies not subsequently mutilated. The savages had taken nothing away but the bullocks, some rations, and a little canvas; the most valuable of the stores were untouched.

In returning, Mitchell ascended the Nundawar Range, and saw its connection with the west of the dividing ridge. Oxley's Liverpool Ranges were visible in the distance, as well as the beautiful country which lines the banks of the Peel.* On Mitchell's arrival in Sydney, the convict still adhered to his story, so that when Captain Forbes, of the 39th, went to the Nammoy with some troopers in search of a gang of bushrangers, he was not without some hopes of finding the Kindur. He reached the Gwyder in lat. 29° 27′, and traced a branch up to the Nundawar Range, thus proving that any river flowing to the north coast must do so beyond the lat. of 29°. There is just the faintest possibility that Barber may have meant the Barcoo, which he traced, by way of the Thompson, to the head of the Flinders; but the probability is that the story was a pure invention, very cleverly contrived, but without any foundation whatever.

The ultimate destination of the Darling now began to be an interesting problem to the colonists. Sturt

* The range now goes by the name of Drummond's Range, and the land around it is one of the most flourishing pastoral districts in Australia.

had seen what he thought was this river coming into the Murray; but this was doubted by many. Major Mitchell believed that the Macquarrie and Lachlan belonged to different basins, and that the division between them was a range which Oxley had seen extending westward between these rivers. It was obvious that this range, if continuous, must separate the Darling from the Murray. Mitchell showed a contempt for Sturt's observations, and very much underrated his geographical accuracy; but he himself was greatly mistaken, as the sequel will show.

As a preliminary step to the exploration of the river, Mr. Dixon was sent in October, 1833, with instructions to trace the ranges between the Lachlan and the Macquarrie, by proceeding westward from Wellington Valley. This he did, however, by crossing to the Bogan (Sturt's New Year's Creek), and having followed the stream down for sixty-seven miles, returned without seeing anything of the high land.

On the 9th March, 1835, Mitchell started. His party was a very large one, and was provided with two boats. The season was very dry, so that when they got fairly down on to the plains, through which the western streams run, a great difficulty was experienced in procuring water. Travelling through fine forest land, they reached, on the 16th April, a creek whose course was northward to the Bogan; but they had to encamp without water. On the 17th none was found, and towards evening, the cattle being much distressed, Major Mitchell made a hurried and unsuccessful search. On his return to the camp, he was informed that Mr. Cunningham, the botanist to the expedition, was missing. This attracted very little notice at the time, because he was often away, and the want of water was so pressing that they had time to think of nothing else. The major hurried on with all the cattle to a small pool, where he was able to satisfy their immediate wants. On his return to the camp, Mr. Cunningham was still missing. His absence was now alarming, so the camp was moved to some permanent water, and a regular search commenced. It

is needless to go through all the details of the melancholy affair. Mr. Cunningham was never found; his tracks were followed for seventy miles, and then his horse was found dead. His whip and gloves, and various other traces were discovered further down the creek, but his body was not obtained. It was not until the return of the party that the mystery was cleared up. It appears that, after five days' wandering, he fell in with some natives. They fed him at first, and treated him with great kindness; but the horrible nature of his position overpowered his strength of mind, and he became delirious. This sealed the poor fellow's fate. The savages grew terrified of their strange guest, and killed him. It is due to Major Mitchell to state that his efforts and searches were untiring; and it was not until there could be no hope of finding him alive that he moved his party onward.

From that point, Mitchell followed down the Bogan, which was like all the creeks described in the interior—a chain of ponds with fertile banks, and very little good country elsewhere. Many natives were seen, and one having, in his terror at the sight of a white man, thrown a boomerang at one of the explorers, received some shots in return; but this was the only act of hostility, and even its poor trembling author consented to have his wounds dressed and cared for by Mitchell. On the 25th May they reached the Darling. It was easily recognised as the same river which had been seen near the Nundawar Range. There were the same earthy, broken banks, the same high trees, and the same long placid reaches. Sturt had seen it not far from this place, and its stream was salt. It was fresh enough now, however; in fact, no water could be purer, or more drinkable. The bed was only two hundred and fifty feet above the level of the sea. The place where they reached it was a beautiful piece of high land, well grassed, and lightly timbered; it was likewise so naturally protected, that Mitchell resolved to make it a depôt camp, while he explored down the river with the boats. They had completed a stockade

by the 1st June, and on that day the major embarked with fourteen men.

The exploration was not, however, destined to continue long in that manner. A day's sailing convinced them that the river was, like the upper part, not navigable, even for boats. Mitchell then made an examination on horseback, and he found that the stream did not improve lower down. It was still continually intersected by rocky dykes, so he broke up the depôt camp, and explored the course of the channel from the land.

The character of this long and winding stream did not vary much, and its exploration was as monotonous as could be well imagined. The scene generally presented only two varieties—either the arid banks of the stream, or the dense scrub which surrounded it. It was the essence of tediousness to drag the drays along its dreary banks, which were not only tame and distressingly alike, but also so lonely and wild that the sounds of their own voices were the only pleasure the men had through the day. Nought seemed to disturb the gloom, as they went further and further away from the homes of civilization. The stream kept to the south, but sometimes a little to the westward. The place where Sturt had reached it was passed, and there the river for a time was salt; but after that its waters diminished to such an alarming extent that Mitchell was afraid that they were going to fail altogether. If they did, further exploration would be impossible. The land was an arid desert, not only dry, but of a nature that never would retain any water. Amid this dismal scene, mountains would occasionally start into view at either side. They were flat-topped, lonely monuments, rocky, barren, and cheerless. Sometimes there would be a change in the banks of the stream, but only showing the mysterious habits of the savages who inhabit these gloomy regions. There was one place where the land was as bare as a fallow field, for the grass had been pulled up, and lay in heaps, like haycocks. There were other spots where some ingenious contrivances had been raised for catching fish, when the river was

much above the level at which the explorers saw it; but the season was one of extraordinary aridity, and all seemed dry, withered, and burnt up. Mitchell made one expedition over to the west side of the stream, where some ranges showed that a change of country might be expected. But there was no alteration for the better. At first, his course lay over some very barren land, and then he ascended a sandstone hill named Mount Murchison. From its summit he saw other peaked hills, and named them after geological celebrities, but the view was over an inhospitable desert of scrub, without any signs of grass or water.

The character of the natives inhabiting this desolate region could not at first be judged, for they took very good care to keep out of sight. The grave-like stillness of the scene was broken, however, on the twenty-seventh day after leaving Fort Bourke. A fine-looking savage was suddenly disturbed in the scrub. His terror was extreme at first, but he regained courage as he saw he was unharmed, and strode away, singing a plaintive song of defiance, all the while using threatening gestures, and casting dust into the air. He soon brought his companions, who came waving green boughs, and twisting themselves into the strangest gestures, as though to exorcise the unnatural beings before them, and drive them back to the place from whence they came. They would hold no communication with the explorers, except to spit at them and throw dust into the air. When they had become a little tranquillized, Mitchell imprudently fired a pistol. "As if they had previously suspected that we were evil demons," says Mitchell, "and had at length clear proof of it, they repeated with tenfold fury their demoniac looks, crouching, and jumping, accompanied with hideous shouts and a war-song." They slowly retired in a circle, using gestures of defiance, spitting, springing with their spears, and throwing dust to the tune of their song; while their black faces, white teeth, and the fiendish glare of their countenances reminded the explorers very much of those evil spirits of which they evidently furnished an instance to the savages.

All the natives after this were troublesome and hostile, and so numerous that Mitchell was obliged to desist from his explorations before he had ascertained that the Darling did actually join the Murray. On the 11th July, when he was at a point rather more than one hundred miles from the junction of the two rivers, an encounter took place between his men and the natives, which hastened his return. One of the men, who was sent for water, was struck senseless by a blow from the club of a native. The offender was shot, and in the *mêlée* which ensued two other natives were killed. This terminated the expedition. Mitchell turned back; and very little else of interest happened to his party until he returned to Sydney.

The observations about the Darling resulting from this journey are worth insertion here. Mitchell says: "From the sparkling transparency of its waters; its undiminished current, sustained without receiving any tributary through a course of six hundred and sixty miles, and especially from its being salt in some places and fresh in others, it seems probable that the current, when in that reduced state, was chiefly supported by springs. The bed of the river is at an average below the surface of the country. To this depth the soil generally consists of clay, in which calcareous concretions and selenite occur abundantly. The country on each side is very arid, and composed of soft clay, which dries into numerous fissures in summer and retains no water in winter. The marks of high flood are apparent on the surface as far as two miles from the channel. The western side appears a desert, which supplies no tributary. The average breadth of the river is fifty yards. The fall of the country being very slight, the velocity of the river did not exceed a mile an hour. Some of the country on the immediate banks contained lagoons, where reeds grew, but the plains near the river were as clear of vegetation as a fallow field, with great irregularity of surface and full of holes. When dry, the soil is so loose that one sinks ankle-deep at every step, great care being necessary to avoid cracks which would easily contain a man's body. Back from the river, the

first elevation usually consisted of hillocks of red sand, so soft and loose that the cattle could scarcely pull the carts through. Further back still, ground consisting of fragments, not much waterworn, of various hard rocks appeared, forming low undulations towards the base of more remote hills. These all were composed of very hard sandstone."

In the above quotation all that this expedition had discovered is stated. The other results may be briefly alluded to. It had elucidated many points of Sturt's former survey of the Macquarrie, and had made known the junction of the Bogan with the Darling. As, however, the junction of the latter with the Murray was not considered established, another expedition was fitted out soon afterwards. This will form the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER XX.

MITCHELL DISCOVERS AUSTRALIA FELIX.

Expedition to the Murray—Junction with the Darling—Hostility of the natives—Return to the Murray—The Avoca—The Grampians—Mount Arapiles — The Wimmera — The Glenelg — Portland Bay — Sierra and Victoria Ranges—Mount Sturgeon—The Pyrenees—Return to Sydney.

ONE of the most remarkable epochs in Australian exploration, namely, the opening up of Australia Felix, now ensued. This discovery placed Mitchell in the foremost rank of explorers, and the country thus thrown open has had more to do with the prosperity of the colonies than any other part of Australia. But it must not be imagined that the whole of Australia Felix was discovered by Mitchell, or that without his co-operation it would not soon have been colonized. About that time the southern coast of Australia occupied very general attention as a site for a colony, and various attempts had been made to settle there. Thus, in 1833, Messrs. Henty made a visit to Portland Bay, on the extreme west of what is now the colony of Victoria. The year following they established a whaling station there, which was very successful. It was from this point that the country was explored at some little distance from the coast as far as Mount Gambier.* Its exploration was the work of many years subsequently.

Another settlement was made in 1835. Mr. Batman, of Tasmania, had long been applying to Governor Arthur for permission to settle on the south coast of Australia. This the governor was unable to give, as he feared that his jurisdiction did not extend so far.

* One of the two volcanic mountains seen first by Grant in the *Lady Nelson*. It is the most fertile tract of coast country in all Australia, but of limited extent.

As a similar reply was anticipated from the Governor of New South Wales, an association was formed, acting on its own responsibility. It was arranged, in 1835, that Mr. Batman should go across Bass's Straits, and, having found suitable land, make a treaty with the natives for its purchase. On the 29th May, he landed about a dozen miles inside Port Phillip Heads. The country was splendid—just in fact what Murray, Flinders, Hovell, and Hume had all said it was. Next day he explored nearer Geelong, and found it still better. After some conference with the natives, he landed, on the 2nd June, in Hobson's Bay. The result of this visit, and of a few little explorations round the Saltwater River, the Yarra, and the Merri Creek, was that Batman purchased, or said he purchased, six hundred thousand acres of land from the natives for some knives, scissors, beads, and tomahawks. Upon this, he left his followers to commence the settlement, and returned to Tasmania for other supplies.

The next settlement of Port Phillip was by Mr. Fawkner, and led to some discoveries. A vessel was fitted out by that person, which sailed from Lancaster to Western Port in July, 1835. Fawkner was not in her. Finding the port ineligible, the crew sailed into Port Phillip Bay on the 15th. For some days they explored the eastern side of the bay, and then entered the Saltwater River. This was found to be undrinkable; but on their return they noticed a stream opening to the eastward of the other, and by following it they discovered the Yarra, and made a settlement upon the land where Melbourne now stands.

This was the state of the colony in 1835. Towards the close of the same year, Major Mitchell was sent to complete the survey of the Darling. He had a very large party this time, with a great number of drays and horses, besides the same two boats supplied in the former journey. On the 17th March, the party started from the rendezvous. They first explored down the Lachlan, for it was intended to reach the Murray, and then trace up the Darling to where the party had formerly turned back. The reader probably remembers the Lachlan, as

described by Oxley—a large and marshy stream, overflowing its banks, so as to reduce the country to a vast morass. But it was very different now. Mitchell found it a mere chain of ponds, and the land round it was so dry and full of cracks that the travelling was dangerous. He tried at once to strike direct across for the Darling, but the country he met was an inhospitable desert, or scrub, quite destitute of water.

In due time the party reached the Murrumbidgee, where Mitchell formed a depôt, while he went on with a light party to explore the Darling. At the Murray he was met by a portion of the tribe which had caused him so much annoyance on his former journey. The natives did not show themselves to be more forgiving than their white brethren, and soon manifested a decided desire to revenge some of their former losses. Mitchell bore with their insolence and annoyance for several days. They followed the party, and persistently harassed their movements, so that not a thing could be done. At last an encounter took place. The battle was short and decisive; seven of the natives were killed and the rest completely routed. The tribe never troubled them any more; but this was not the case with those they met further on. Besides these inconveniences, their course was impeded by swamps, and branches and backwaters of the Murray. The country on either side of the main stream was well grassed, and lightly timbered with large box and gum trees; but immediately behind this thin belt the land was of the most arid description, being fine red sand, and densely scrubby. These are the Murray scrubs, and, unfortunately, they extend much further into the interior than Mitchell at that time suspected. When he reached the Darling, he did not explore it back to the turning-point of the previous journey. The country was much too difficult for this, and the disposition of the natives too hostile. He, however, satisfied himself that the junction was that which Sturt had first pointed out, and that its character was maintained in every particular, even to the worthlessness of the country upon its banks until it joined the Murray.

On the 10th June, he returned to the depôt, and then made preparations for exploring the upward course of the Murray. This was the commencement of a really pleasant portion of their journey. At each step the water became more abundant, the land better, and the scenery more beautiful, until at last the explorers became almost bewildered at seeing such vast riches unclaimed and unused, far surpassing anything yet known within the limits of Australia.

On the 16th of June, the explorers left their encampment and continued their travels up the left bank of the Murray, over ground much better than any they had seen upon the right bank. The country abounded with kangaroo; and well grassed plains extended as far as the eye could reach, which was far enough, under the bright sun and clear atmosphere of the lovely season of their journey. It was beautiful to look down amid the closely growing trees upon some of the arid branches of the river. The shade of the dense undergrowth would almost conceal the windings of the water, and thus afford a shelter to every kind of game upon its surface. Such spots, echoing only to the sounds of the wild-fowl, or the cry of a native as he hunted through the woods, seemed romantic and charming to the explorers. One of these arid branches obliged them to turn to the westward on the 17th in order to avoid it, and they were prevented from approaching the Murray for the rest of the day. When they reached it again, it was flowing rapidly in a narrow channel, and within two or three feet of the top of the banks, with a breadth of not more than seventy yards. Mitchell now suspected that he had passed a junction—and so he had. Some few years afterwards it was discovered that he had passed without seeing the junction of the Edward. This large stream drains the waters of the Yanko and the Billibong, and several other important creeks which anastomose with the Murray and Murrumbidgee on their downward course.

The country now improved, but changed its character in a very remarkable manner. On crossing

the extremity of a sand-hill a few miles above the junction, a strange view met their eyes. There was nothing but a vast region of reeds, looking like a prairie of bulrushes. As these extended as far as the eye could see, there was nothing for it but to push straight through them. It was not very difficult to do so, for the ground was good and seemed to be much frequented by the natives. There were lofty mounds of ashes, showing how highly washed rush-roots were prized by the natives; and there were paths running out in all directions through the forest of reeds. Mitchell says that one remarkable difference between the Murray and Murrumbidgee consisted in the way in which the reeds grew upon the banks. Upon the latter they never came down to the water's edge, but made a fine imposing wall of green, above it was very pleasant and characteristic to see. On the Murray they extended back about eight miles, and were run through with marshes and creeks, amid which the explorers could trace the dusky faces of the savages peeping at them over the green waving mass.

On the 20th, they reached another junction, which they followed up. It was called the Loddon; and, with all the richness and all the abundance of game upon its waters which the Murray displayed, was a much more pleasant stream to follow, for it led due southward. But, though rich, it was a strange country. The river flowed through an immense plain, without a scrap of timber of any kind upon its surface. In fact, it did not supply them with sufficient for a camp-fire the first night. It was about fifty yards wide, and running with a current of more than three miles an hour. There were numerous lakes on the east side of it, and on all these Mitchell remarked that there were crescent-shaped hills on the eastern side, while the west was low and level.*

At the end of the third day of tracing the Loddon, the explorers lost the stream, and after searching for

* I have explained in another work that these elevations are probably owing to the effect of prevalent west winds, which drift up decayed vegetable matter on to the east side of the lagoons.

three days over well-watered plains, found the country so intersected with branches that it was impossible to distinguish the main channel; so the party rested, while Mitchell laid down the results of his survey hitherto. He found that the lakes were nearly all circular; and having no obvious connection with the river, he considered that they were the remains of what the surface was before the process of upheaval began to carry off its waters.*

They could not find the Loddon again; but in its place discovered a much wider stream, which Mitchell considered was the Murray. He did not follow it; the country was much too beautiful and fertile to the southward, and as it was well watered, they continued in that direction. There was a hill in the distance, named Pyramid Hill, which gave a new and splendid view when it was ascended, and threw the hopes and desires of the explorers on to an entirely new class of objects. Far in the distance could be seen a fine, bold outline of rugged mountains, but, though too remote to be more than barely visible, they announced plainly a region different from the dividing ridge; like it giving rise to rivers, and like it surrounded by fertile tracts, which they longed to explore.

For many days they travelled over lightly timbered, undulating country, watered by beautiful streams, and all, more or less, of soil at least fit for pasturage. As they neared the ranges, their true proportions burst out in all the rocky magnificence of crags and dark blue gorges. It seemed too hazardous to venture into such a region with wheeled carriages, so Mitchell explored the country around to see if a passage could be found along their edges. Thus they passed the Avoca and Avon Rivers. The land on their banks was very good, but they were now so accustomed to see such at every step that it was not thought necessary to note any in parti-

* This was a very important observation, and as correct as it was creditable to Mitchell's sagacity and penetration. An excellent illustration of the process is seen in other parts of Australia; between the Murray and the Glenelg the land is not drained by any stream, and there the surface is one continued chain of swamps or circular lakes, like those described by Mitchell here.

cular. From a high forest hill near the last stream they obtained a complete view of the Grampians, for that was the name which the hills received. They were, to use the words of the explorer, a noble range of mountains, rising in the south to a stupendous height, and presenting as bold and picturesque an outline as ever a painter imagined. The highest and most eastern summit (Mount William) was hidden in the clouds, although the evening was serene; and from whatever point it was viewed it showed the same bold, lofty front, the same circlet of dark craggy hills around its base. It was about thirty miles distant, and Mitchell resolved to rest the cattle, while he made an excursion towards it. He proceeded with six men on horseback. Three miles from the camp, they met a deep creek, into which one of the party, named Richardson, fell. From this accidental circumstance it was named after him. Beyond this they entered one of the finest tracts of forest land they had hitherto met, and which was intersected by numerous tributaries of the Avon. The scenery was beautiful. A fine forest, graceful streams, and in the background a majestic pile of grand summits would make a beautiful scene anywhere; and here its charms were enhanced by being an unbroken solitude.

Before they commenced the ascent of the mountain they had to cross another river, named by the natives, the Wimmera. It seemed to flow to the north-west, and did not at all look like a tributary of the Murray. After a difficult and most distressing journey, they reached the summit of Mount William; but the day was too far spent to return, so they passed the night upon the mountain-top. A wretched night it was. The height of the mountain is over four thousand feet, so that the cold was intense, and large icicles hung from the bushes around. The explorers had no food, and could make no fire, so that they sat shivering and almost perished with hunger and exhaustion. But the morning repaid them. The view was splendour in itself. The rugged summits of the hills underneath were as grand as grand could be, while below them the country lay like a panorama of wood and water, and

gentle streams; large white lakes and swelling downs, all varied by a thousand colours under the rising sun. To the south the country was clear for travelling, and thither Mitchell was very anxious to proceed; but there were some isolated hills in the far distance westward which he wished to examine first.

In this direction he had to cross no less than five branches of the Wimmera, and some were so deep that the assistance of the boats was required. Other creeks succeeded, and then the Wimmera again, as wide as the Murrumbidgee, but resembling it in no other respect. There were no waterworn banks, and no back waters, only verdant grassy slopes, with the perpetual accompaniment of lines of stately gum trees. Mitchell now hoped to be able to follow this stream to the sea, but to his surprise he found that it passed to the north of Mount Arapiles, and seemed flowing in a northerly direction. He imagined that it must have some westerly exit on a hitherto unknown part of the coast; but its ultimate course is now known to be into Lake Hindmarsh, and subsequently into Lake Albacutya.

Mount Arapiles was found to be a singular upheaval of coarse sandstone, containing large waterworn quartz pebbles interstratified in its mass. The strata seemed to be turned on end, and stand out in bold escarpment on the north-western side. Its yellow and mossy precipices, upwards of four hundred feet high, have a bold, wild, and most picturesque appearance. Mitchell saw the bed of the Wimmera trending away northward, and as he could not observe signs of any other stream to the westward, he concluded that this hill divided the fluvial from the undrained country. This was a shrewd and most accurate surmise. There is, in fact, no stream of any kind to be met with from thence westward to the coast—a distance of over 120 miles, in the straightest possible line. The country, however, is covered with swamps and lagoons, and forms an area of about 250 miles long, and 70 miles wide.

From Mount Arapiles, Mitchell saw that the Grampians were continued by another range, which he named after the Queen. He saw that he could not well pass

to the east from where he was as yet, so he continued south-west. On the 25th he renewed his journey over a uniform country of good soil, with *Casuarina* and gum trees abounding. It was not such rich land as the flowery pastures of the Avoca and Avon; but still it was good enough for pastoral purposes, and better far than any one would have thought of finding in Australia, so far away from any mountain system. On the last day of July they came suddenly upon another river—broad rapid and deep. It was evidently quite disconnected with the other waters, for its course was to the south-west, and its bed cut very deep down into the soft tableland. It was named the Glenelg. Where its waters were first seen the width was 125 yards, and the boats were required to ferry the party over. When they were launched, Mitchell thought it would be a good opportunity to use them for the further exploration of the stream. Nine miles' journey, however, convinced him that it would save time to explore by land. He accordingly returned to his companions, and all continued to move down the stream together.

And now commenced the journey through the valley of the Glenelg, one of the most beautiful portions of Australia. One is stopped at every sentence in Mitchell's narrative with exclamations about the richness of the soil, and the loveliness of the scene. There was, however, one sad drawback to the novelty of their position. The weather was wet, and the country was boggy, so that the labours of the cattle were fearful, and the daily journeys proportionately short. The difficulty at last became so great that the major rode on in advance to look for some better path; in doing so he discovered one of the most beautiful valleys in all Australia—the vale of the Wannon. "I had not," he says, "proceeded more than about five miles to the southward when I perceived before me a ridge in the bluey distance, which was rather an unusual object in that close country. We soon emerged from the ridge, and found that we were on a kind of tableland, and approaching a deep ravine coming from our right, and terminating in a fine open country below, watered by a

winding river. We descended by a bold feature to the bottom of the ravine, and found there a foaming little river hurrying downwards over the rocks. After this we ascended a very steep but grassy mountain-side beyond it, and on reaching a brow of high land, what a noble prospect appeared! A river winding among meadows, fully a mile broad, and green as an emerald. Above them rose swelling hills of fantastic shapes; but all were smooth and richly covered with grass. Behind these were higher hills, having grass on their sides, and trees on their summits, extending throughout the landscape as far as the eye could reach, forming a country surpassing in beauty and richness any yet discovered." Thus far the major. From my own experience, I can testify that there is no place like it for richness and beauty in all Australia. Three rivers—the Wando, Wannon, and Steep Bank Creek, join the Glenelg. They all of them cut a deep and sloping channel into the tableland. The slopes at each side are rendered gently undulating by the drainage of little creeks and mountain-rills, and as all are covered with a turf as close as a garden lawn, of the most lovely bright green, with black-looking trees, the scene looks like a gentleman's park in England. But from the summit of the tableland, as Mitchell says, the beauty is most surprising. The mammillated hills in the valleys, the flat summits of the dividing ridges, thickly clothed with forest, the dells and gullies in every variety, fading into a confused mass, through which a silver stream seems to twist itself, make a peaceful, lovely prospect, becoming daily more beautiful as it becomes more studded with villages and signs of agriculture.

Of course, such gullies and hills, however pleasant to look at, were very difficult to travel over. It was not alone having to haul the carts and baggage up the steep banks, and to lower them down on the other side; but there were many streams and rivulets to cross, and the ground was so soft that the drays and bullocks were getting bogged at every inch. The country, in fact, was like a morass, and the tops of the hills in this respect were just as bad as the valleys. At last,

Mitchell became tired of this floundering and dragging. From the top of a range, named the Rifle Range, he could see Mount Gambier in the dim distance to the south-west, so he knew that he could not be very far from the coast. The river was now broad and navigable for his boats, and as this offered the easiest and most expeditious mode of exploring it, a depôt was formed at the junction of a small river, and Mitchell embarked upon its waters. He took with him sixteen men and both the boats, so that no time might be lost or unnecessary fatigue incurred. At first, their progress was stopped a good deal by dead timber, but the stream soon widened out with fine reaches. The banks were very heavily timbered until near the mouth, where they formed high cliffs of fossiliferous limestone, very much like the river Murray. The scenery near these precipitous sides was very romantic. The tops of the rocks were timbered with dense and tangled brushwood, and the river became narrow between them, dark and deep, throwing a mysterious air of gloom over the silent, lonely waters. This part of the river was all that was interesting about it. It opened out near its mouth into shallow sandy flats, or salt marsh, flanked with irregular bushy sand-hills, and when the mouth was discovered it was closed by a sandy bar, over which a very heavy surf was beating.

Mitchell was very much disappointed at this termination. He had anticipated a fine navigable outlet on a sheltered part of the coast, but there was not even a boat harbour. He passed along the lonely sands, and found one or two marks of European visits, or probably, the remains of wrecked vessels, but no other signs of human inhabitants. The sand-hills seemed as if they had done nothing but echo the roaring of the surf or the moaning of the wind since they were first created.

When they got back to the depôt, Mitchell made another descent towards the west to explore Portland Bay. His journey was still over boggy, soft ground, but at the same time through a magnificent forest. The huge tall gum trees were growing straight as an arrow, and without a branch until sixty or seventy feet from the

ground. Underneath was a rich carpet of moss and decayed vegetation, for the growth of the trees was thick enough to make the shade even gloomy. Rushes, scrub, delicate acacias and ferns, were as thick as they could be, and in the crevices and gullies fern trees spread out their graceful foliage like palms in a tropical forest. When the sea was reached, the men found many signs of European visits, much more indeed than in Discovery Bay, at the mouth of the Glenelg. At the extreme east of the bay some curious rocks were noticed on the land, which attracted notice at the time. But when a small ship was discovered at anchor, and fresh foot-marks found upon the sand, the rocks were seen to be houses. This was the settlement of Messrs. Henty. It may be easily imagined with what joy and surprise these two companies of pioneers met in the wilderness. It was not without its risks, however. Mitchell was obliged to approach the settlement very carefully, for his armed party might easily have been mistaken for bushrangers, and fired upon as they approached.

Having rested a few days at Henty's, and recruited his stores, Mitchell set out again on his way home. His course was first to reach the foot of the Grampians, and then to strike in an east and northerly direction for Sydney. His way led through another fine forest and over two streams, now known as the First and Second Rivers. There were two mountains which he had seen upon his left on his way down, and these he was anxious to examine. They were named Mount Eeles and Mount Napier. The first lay in his route, but was not of much importance; the second was almost impossible to reach, because of an immense swamp which seemed to come from it. The country, as usual, was boggy in the extreme. Finding that their greatest difficulty was in dragging the boat, they determined to abandon it, and keep the small one alone for whatever rivers they might have to cross. While the carriage was being altered for the purpose, at a place near the present town of Branksholme, Mitchell made a visit to Mount Napier. He found it to be an extinct volcano, with an old stream of stony lava extending miles into the interior from its

summit. He now saw that to the south of the Grampians there was another range of mountains extending. These were called the Sierra Ranges, terminating in two fine elevations, named respectively Mount Sturgeon and Mount Abrupt. Between these and Mount Napier were lovely plains, highly timbered, and supporting in the centre a splendid fresh-water lake. Nothing could be more picturesque than the scene, which is now the most flourishing agricultural district in Victoria. To the west was a shady piece of woodland with Mounts Pierrepoint and Bainbrigge jutting above. It now encloses the largest inland towns in Western Victoria. All that Mitchell in his raptures of admiration described as green pastures seemed very much the richer for being surrounded with the grand outlines of the Sierra Ranges.

The Mount Sturgeon plains were found, as usual, boggy; indeed, this seems to be a certain consequence of rich soil in the winter throughout Australia. There were places where the travelling was easier, that is where the basaltic rocks protruded out of the subsoil; but these were changes very slightly for the better. Mitchell, of course, ascended Mount Abrupt. After the description of so many mountain views the reader will get tired of them probably, if they are often repeated. Suffice it to say that the scene was almost as sublime from this mountain as from Mount William. It was a very bright and clear day, and the summits of the hills were revealed clearly all around in the finest array of rugged magnificence. What gives these ranges an aspect more peculiarly their own is that they are like a series of square ledges sloping down on their west sides in gentle declivities, and exposing fine stony escarpments to the eastward. From the east side the peaks look like the teeth of a saw, and from the south like a series of terraced slopes.

Mitchell could see the ocean from Mount Abrupt, but what interested him most was the appearance of the country in the direction in which their journey lay. There he saw a vast extent of open downs, and could trace their undulations to where they joined a range of

mountains of apparently easy access. The straightest line passed just under a bluff about fifty miles off, and there was a good road to it, by avoiding many reedy lakes. It was found, however, that the country was much softer than usual, and as the cattle were quite exhausted by their recent exertions, he resolved to divide the party. Leaving half here with the cattle, to recruit, he intended to push on, and then send out assistance to the others as they advanced.

On the 19th September all the arrangements were completed, and Mitchell started with a small party. The rest of the journey is very easily described. At first, the country was lightly wooded, and they crossed a small river, named the Hopkins. After this it opened out into enormous plains like prairies, with nothing but grass and salt lakes upon them. The scenery was still fine. Of course, there could not be much beauty where there was nothing but treeless plains, but the distant mountains still lent their charm to the prospect. When the plains were ended, they had to cross a range which extended to the southward, and broke into bold ravines on the eastern side, being also connected with noble mountains in the distance, all grassed to their summits. These were the Australian Pyrenees; not probably so high as their namesakes of Spain, but certainly richer. On their flanks have been discovered the most abundant gold mines that the world can show. Had Mitchell known the riches beneath his feet, his raptures of admiration would have found another object. But there was only the view to see then. He could trace the Dividing Range which Hume and Hovell had crossed eleven years before, and to one of the highest hills which had cost them so much difficulty to pass he gave the name of Mount Macedon. From its summit he saw Port Phillip, and was near enough to distinguish something like tents upon its northern point. Was this Batman's Settlement?

Returning to the beautiful slopes of the ranges which he called Eden, but which now have a world-wide reputation as the Cluness, Daisy Hill, and Castlemaine Diggings, Mitchell found some beautiful falls in

a river called the Barnard. They were fine rocky precipices, over which the stream came tumbling in a pretty cascade. This river was a branch of the Campaspe, which was afterwards crossed. Beyond this they traversed open plains again. Some natives had been seen at intervals, and all more or less troublesome, but the party had found no difficulty in getting rid of them. Amongst some they met were articles of European manufacture, especially an old razor, probably a part of the purchase-money which Batman had given for the land. In one instance, their troublesome visitants were dispersed in a singular and novel manner, from which other explorers might usefully take a lesson. Some of the men found the savages sneaking upon the camp at night-time, and to scare them, Mitchell made use of two masks he had with him. These were put on two of the men, and they advanced towards the natives with burning bluelights in their hands, while rockets were let off by their companions, and a dismal noise made under the cart with a speaking-trumpet. The plan succeeded marvellously, and the blacks were so terrified that they never came near the explorers afterwards.

From this point the journey was over the alluvial flats through which the rivers discovered by Hume and Hovell drain towards the Murray. The scenery was a monotonous series of plains, very rich, but boggy, and watered by such streams as the Goulburn, the Ovens, and the King. Some few ranges intervened, but they were mere granite ridges, not very remarkable. On the 17th October, after crossing a range, they reached the Murray again, somewhere about the present site of Albury. Here the river was so swollen that it took them two days to cross, and even then not without some risk and the loss of one bullock. They then sank the boat and boat-carriage, in order to leave it for the party behind, but one of the men, with the carpenter, very nobly volunteered to go back and meet them, to show them the route and to construct rafts. This offer was immediately accepted, and full rations issued to the men, though they could ill be spared at the time.

On the 21st, the remainder of the party journeyed

towards a hill, which they named Mount Trafalgar. From its summit a range was seen bounding, as Mitchell hoped, the Murrumbidgee. But it did not; and instead of it an extremely mountainous country extended beyond. The river was not reached until the 23rd, and meanwhile their difficulties had been so great and their rations so small that they had to kill a bullock. The Murrumbidgee was flowing to the westward, over a gravelly bottom, its scenery being highly embellished by lofty *Casuarinâ* trees, whose drooping masses of the darkest green shade the waters so gracefully. Though this was lower down upon the river than any settler had hitherto penetrated, the explorers could see plenty of cattle tracks about. At length, to their joy, they discovered a small house and station. On riding up to it, an old man came to the door, beating the ashes off a loaf. He received them all most cordially when his surprise subsided. Just then several drays appeared on the opposite side, coming along the road from Sydney, and from these the party were accommodated with enough supplies for their wants and those of their companions left behind.

Here concludes Mitchell's journey. He had carried his party over a distance of two thousand four hundred miles, amid the finest region that ever fell to the lot of any explorer to discover. While every credit must be given to him for good management, something must also be attributed to good luck. If he had been two months later the glory would have been taken from his hands. As it is, his name has become connected, and most justly, with the richest inheritance of the continent. It is called Australia Felix to this day.

This journey also discovered a new river and mountain system, which lies inside the great circle of streams sweeping westward from the tableland. The whole chain is a most important feature, and to its influence the rich country discovered by Mitchell is entirely owing. The mountains consist of three ranges extending over nearly a degree of latitude and twenty miles of longitude. The extreme eastern and highest summit is Mount William, four thousand five hundred feet above

the sea. The most northern and elevated range extends from Mount William to Mount Zero, and is steepest on the northern side. From this two other ranges branch off to the south, the western being called the Victoria Range, and the eastern the Sierra, from its serrated appearance. It is a singular fact, that while a great many of the waters from these hills drain to the south-west, some are lost in the Murray scrubs, and others drain into the Murray.

CHAPTER XXI.

EARLY EXPLORATIONS ROUND ADELAIDE AND MELBOURNE.

Settlement of Melbourne—Establishment of South Australia—Early explorations there—Lake Alexandrina and the Murray mouth—Hawdon overland, from Sydney to Adelaide—Eyre traces down the Wimmera—Bonney from Portland to Adelaide—Henty to Mount Gambier.

THE news of Mitchell's discoveries acted like magic throughout Australia. Every person who could muster a few hundred sheep was off to find a run for them amid the recently explored country. The home Government discouraged the exodus, as it was much averse to the establishment of new and distant settlements, which increased the expense of administration and destroyed the centralization they were anxious to keep up. One must see, nevertheless, that a large development of the resources of the country should be the first consideration, and of far more importance than any of these objects. In 1837, however, the colony might be considered to have secured a footing. I need not dwell upon the manner in which the rival claims of Batman and Fawkner were disposed of. The sales alleged to have been made by the natives were not recognised, and the land was surveyed and sold. It will be useless, likewise, to attempt to describe how the country around Port Phillip was surveyed and explored. Many of the records of private exploration are irretrievably lost, and those which are retained are so numerous and various that it would require volumes to enter into the details of each one in particular.

About this time, also, the colony of South Australia was established. Colonel Light was despatched by the South Australian Commissioners, in March, 1836, to

choose and survey the site for a capital on the shores of St. Vincent's Gulf. A large number of emigrants were already settled at Kangaroo Island, which, in spite of Flinders' encouraging description, was found quite unfit for colonization. Colonel Light proceeded to a shallow creek on the east side of Gulf St. Vincent. Eight miles further inland he fixed the site of what is now the city of Adelaide. Governor Hindmarsh arrived with emigrants in December, 1836, and having united his party with those who were on Kangaroo Island, the landing and declaration of the colony took place on the 28th of the same month. As in the case of Melbourne, I shall not enter into the particulars of the small explorations made by different settlers, but merely allude to those which include the discovery of new features. Besides, it is easy to see at a glance all there was to discover in South Australia. Adelaide was founded on the plains which lie between the Flinders range and the sea. North and south the plains continue, but on the south side spurs of the mountains soon close in upon the sea. Explorations in the plains could only lead to the discovery of new rivers and creeks, and in the mountains new valleys and fertile glens. Of course these abounded. Every journey revealed some new feature of nature; every explorer came back exulting over the new and varied scenes which the land afforded. A fine spur from the ranges was found to strike out northward, about thirty miles from Adelaide. This was the Barossa Range; the best testimony to whose richness is the great number of farms and settlements which are found upon it now.

The first persons who explored over the range to Lake Alexandrina were Messrs. Cock and Finlayson. They discovered many islands in the basin which had been mistaken by Sturt, for the main shore. The largest and principal of them was called Hindmarsh Island, after the governor. They discovered also the Hindmarsh River, and, in returning, came across another stream. Its banks were well grassed, open forest land, which continued rich and fertile right up to the slopes of the mountains. To use the words of one of

the party, they often stopped to gaze with wonder and delight at the richness of the country around them.

It was early an important object with the colonists to ascertain whether there was any outlet for the Murray, besides the one seen by Sturt and Barker. Messrs. Strangways and Hutchinson were chosen for the purpose, in December, 1837. They succeeded in taking a cart the whole way, drawn only by two oxen; but the hills were so rugged and precipitous, and the ravines so deep, at the southern extremity of the Mount Lofty range, that they were sometimes obliged to unload the carts, and having assisted the bullocks by ropes, carried over the provisions themselves. When they reached Encounter Bay, they proceeded into the Murray mouth, in a whale-boat. The result of the survey was, to prove beyond a doubt that there was no opening to the river except the narrow channel first seen by Sturt. This narrow inlet is not always open, but even when it is, the constant surf, breaking at least a quarter of a mile from the beach, renders it utterly unnavigable to any but small steamers of very shallow draught. During the examination of Lake Alexandrina, a large salt-water arm was found to extend to the southward. This was called Coorong by the natives, and is a singular feature, whose character will best be seen from the map.

Messrs. Strangways and Hutchinson met at Encounter Bay two men, who told them that they had recently arrived at the mouth of the Murray, by walking along the coast from the western side of Cape Otway; their only provision for this long journey was flour, and this was carried by a horse they had with them. The journey occupied about six weeks. They met very few natives, and no stream too deep for them to ford, until they came to the Murray. This, of course, was a very important fact; and while it confirmed Mitchell's exploration, was decisive as to the non-existence of any large outlet on the south coast. The Murray could not be passed so easily, so the men traced round the shores of the lake for some distance, and then constructed a raft, and abandoned their horse. The

raft was pushed across by means of a long pole, about fifteen feet in length. They were all day crossing, and during the whole time up to their waists in water. The names of these intrepid pioneers are lost; but the raft was still swimming in the lake when Mr. Strangways passed, and confirmed the truth of their story.

On returning to the place where they had left the cart, they were joined by Sir John Jeffcott, Captain Blenkinsopp, and some others. The exploring party left the channel in safety, but this was not the case with the others. The second boat had nearly passed all the breakers when it filled in the surf, and Sir J. Jeffcott, Captain Blenkinsopp, and two of the boat's crew were drowned. Sir J. Jeffcott was a judge in the colony, and he was well known in England in connection with a fatal duel in 1830.

These were not the only explorations about this time in the neighbourhood of the three colonies. Messrs. Hawdon and Gardiner were the first who brought cattle overland from New South Wales to Port Phillip, and very shortly after, the former gentleman successfully drove stock from Sydney to Adelaide. The Murray River made these journeys a matter of very little difficulty, with regard to water; but the natives were extremely troublesome, and it was a great feat to bring cattle safely through the midst of these hostile tribes.

The first journey overland, from Portland Bay to Adelaide, was made by Mr. Bonney with cattle, in March, 1839. After leaving the Glenelg, on a westerly course, the country was found to decline into a flat sandy level, extending as far as the eye could reach. Beyond this, a singular tract succeeded. The country was a chain of swamps, occasionally as much as ten miles wide, and divided by hills of *Casuarina* and *Eucalyptus*, with fine grass all round. The swamps were covered with reeds, and were quite dry there upon the surface; but by digging a few feet, abundance of fresh water could always be obtained. Expecting the good country to continue northward, Mr. Bonney changed his course to north-west, and after five days'

travelling, the scenery changed its character. Grass and water became more difficult to obtain. The cattle were then driven towards the coast, and a fine fresh-water marsh, named Lake Hawdon, was discovered. This was the first of a series of features of the kind, extending beyond Lacepede Bay. From that point, however, water was not easily obtained, and in penetrating through the dense scrub which surrounds Lake Alexandrina, the party were so distressed for want of water, that they had to kill some of the cattle, and drink their blood. This journey showed that there was available land between Portland and the Murray, even though no river emptied itself upon the coast in the interim, except the Glenelg. A little to the east of Bonney's route, very fertile pastoral country has been found, which is known as the south-eastern district of South Australia. In the southern point of it occurs the volcanic mountains Gambier and Schanck, which were first seen by Grant, in the *Lady Nelson*. These were settled upon from Portland, and, as already stated, form one of the richest agricultural tracts in Australia. It is terminated northwards by the Mosquito Plains, and these by the tract known as the Tatiara country. The latter is bounded by an impenetrable scrub, which continues, as far as known, right up to the Murray River.

Mr. Eyre, whose name was subsequently connected with the most important explorations in South Australia, was one of the first who took cattle overland from Port Phillip to Adelaide. His journey led to one remarkable discovery, and that was with regard to the Wimmera, the source of which had so much puzzled the colonists since the time of Mitchell. The major, it will be remembered, had first crossed the river near Mount William, and instead of flowing towards the south coast, as anticipated, he had seen it take a north-west course from Mount Arapiles. Now, as there was no stream joining the Murray in that direction at all corresponding with the size of the Wimmera, the question was, what became of it? It was to Eyre that the colony owed the solution of the problem.

He left Port Phillip in February, 1838, intending to strike across the interior of the country, and thus avoid the many disadvantages of tracing down the Murray. After crossing Mount Alexander, he passed for the first hundred and fifty miles through a fine country, watered by many channels running to the north-west. So far the cattle did well, and no difficulty was experienced. But the creeks soon began to fail. To Eyre's great disappointment, he found that they ran out on very extensive plains divided by narrow hills of pine, and forming a perfectly level country without any signs of water. A river was looked for in vain, that would take him across this tract, and after the cattle had been exposed to considerable privations, in making a search for water, Eyre decided on tracing down the Wimmera, feeling convinced that it must be the Lindsay which Sturt had noticed joining the Murray on the south side. With this view he followed Mitchell's course to the south-west, passing close under the Grampians, until he reached the stream. From the point at which Mitchell left it, he traced it in a north-westerly direction to lat. 36° 8′, where it emptied itself into a large fresh-water lake, about forty miles in circumference. It was named Lake Hindmarsh. The country through which the river ran was very sandy, and the land around it barren. From Lake Hindmarsh he could discover no watercourse to the north or west, though a laborious and anxious search was continued for three weeks. During this time he attempted, with two companions, to penetrate to the Murray or Lindsay, through a country thickly covered with scrub, and with absolutely no grass. After travelling four days, and penetrating upwards of a hundred miles, the horses could proceed no further for want of food and water. Indeed, the animals were too far gone to return, and the explorers had to regain their camp by a terribly arduous journey on foot.

This journey decided the impracticability of the route Eyre had chosen. It was ascertained that no body of water from the Grampians was sufficient to reach the Murray. It had since been found that

another lake extends beyond Lake Hindmarsh, and that even beyond this there is a chain of shallow lagoons for many miles; but it can only be in very extraordinary seasons that they act as a channel to the Murray; and no such season has yet been seen by the Europeans settled there.

Finding it impossible to proceed on the line he had chosen, Eyre was obliged to return to the route followed by Hawdon, and so reached Adelaide in safety.

CHAPTER XXII.

GREY UPON THE NORTH-WEST COAST.

Expedition to Hanover Bay—Landing upon the coast—Terrible adventures—Fresh survey of the interior—Arrival of the ponies—Dreadful weather—Animals begin to die—Commencement of the journey—Encounter with the natives—Grey wounded—River Glenelg—Basaltic tableland—Painted caves—Failure of the expedition—Return.

In 1836, while Batman was settling at Port Phillip, and Mitchell's discoveries were progressing, Captain Grey, of the 83rd, and Lieutenant Lushington, addressed a letter to Lord Glenelg, then Secretary for the Colonies, offering to conduct an expedition from Swan River to the northward, in order to ascertain definitely whether any large river emptied itself upon the west or north-west side. Guided by a recommendation from the Royal Geographical Society, the Government accepted the offer, and the following instructions were given :—They were to embark in the *Beagle*, then fitting out for a survey of the coasts of Australia, and, proceeding to the Cape, were there to hire a vessel. They were then to land somewhere near Prince Regent's River, on the northern coast, and having examined the country, were to take a course in the direction of the great opening behind Dampier Land, and thus journey to the Swan.

Acting on these instructions, they left the Cape in the *Lynher* schooner, in October, 1837. The expedition consisted of twelve men, with thirty-one sheep, nineteen goats, and six dogs. Their plan was to proceed to Hanover Bay, and, having landed the stores, to despatch the schooner to Timor for ponies, and when

these arrived, to proceed to the interior. On the 2nd December they reached Port George the Fourth, and anchored at sunset off Entrance Island. Grey admits that the aspect of the shore discouraged him. Its barren, stony red cliffs have been described as desolate in connection with the surveys of King. Those were made nearly twenty years previously, but the stones were no better now. The only reason for which this part of the coast had been selected was the abundance of fresh water, which had been described as falling in cascades from the crevices in the sandstone.

The next day, as they were becalmed, Grey was anxious to examine the shore a little more closely. He burned to commence his explorations, and, regardless of his being quite unused to a tropical climate, and thinking nothing of salt-water inlets and hostile savages, he conceived the mad idea of walking round the beach, and meeting the schooner at the bottom of the bay. His proposal was accepted by the captain, and he landed with a few men and some dogs. Scarcely had the boat returned, when he found out his mistake. The day was clear and hot, and the sun threw down a scorching heat upon the fiery red rocks around them. Cooped up in a vessel for many months, as they had been, they could not walk far in a temperate region; but here, where the stones and sands were so hot that one could scarcely walk upon them,* where not a breath of wind freshened the air, nor a single tree gave them shelter, one can easily imagine what their sufferings soon were. But this was not all. The surface was the red sandstone, so cracked and broken, so fissured and piled that it was like climbing a ruin; and amid the stone grew tangled brushwood and spinifex grass, hiding the crevices so that men and dogs fell into them at every step. It was easy to see that this could not continue long. Grey discovered his mistake too late, and now the schooner was out of sight and hearing. All he could do was to make towards some shady spot, and there rest until evening. But such a spot he

* This is perfectly true. Even in Adelaide, on a hot summer's day, you could no more take up a stone and hold it than you could a piece of red-hot iron.

could not find. Meanwhile the heat began to tell upon them terribly as soon as their scanty stock of water was exhausted. First the dogs gave in; some disappeared mysteriously in the cracks, and others dropped down dead. Then the men also began to drop behind. With the greatest difficulty they were brought along to a little pool of water in a picturesque valley, and there the party rested for a while. But their difficulties were only commencing. When they attempted to move on again, the men were so enfeebled that they could only advance at a rate which would take them nearly three days to reach the vessel. This would never do, for their lives depended upon their reaching the anchorage that night. Every resource was tried. They plunged into the sea, and essayed every other means in vain to refresh themselves. It was of no use. At last Grey started in advance with one companion, intending to send out assistance from the schooner. Here a new obstacle arose. At a mile and a half his progress was stopped by an arm of the sea about five hundred yards wide, out of which the tide was sweeping like a torrent. What to do now Grey was at a complete loss to know. He had never thought of such dangers beforehand, and the madness of his project came very reproachfully before him. His companion could not swim, and for Grey to go alone seemed very hazardous. To say nothing of the danger from sharks and alligators, there was a native perched upon the rocks on the opposite side, and where he was, more might be. But Grey's resolution was soon taken. He must render assistance to his companions, so he resolved to cross. He stripped to his shirt, and with his military cap upon his head, and a pistol in his hand for defence, he plunged in. All the protection the pistol was likely to afford was soon destroyed, for the current was so impetuous that it became a struggle for life with Grey, and the weapon was abandoned. Then the cap caught so much water that the chin-strap would have choked him, had he not abandoned that too. After a fearful struggle, the waves threw him upon the opposite shore. Wounded and exhausted, he clambered up the rocks with nothing in

the world about him but his shirt, and just in time to hear the war-cry of the savages close to where he lay. Fortunately, it was nearly dark. He managed to secrete himself in a crevice, not daring to show his head, or to look around and see where his companions or the schooner might be. His position was a trying one, but nature could bear no more, and in spite of his danger he fell asleep upon the rocks—a very different spectacle from what he had presented when he started in the morning. From this position he was rescued by a boat from the schooner about ten at night; and thus terminated his first adventure in Australia.

After this little piece of experience, Grey became more cautious. His first care was to search for a landing-place, but this was not found so easily. The only openings on this part of the coast are narrow gorges, which open into large basins at some distance inland. The sides are lofty and precipitous; red sandstone, of course, and covered as thickly as possible with a dense tropical vegetation. Landing-places in such localities were not readily seen. The huge and irregular piles of rocks were obstacles in some places, in others, the trees were as impenetrable as a stone wall. All was very romantic and beautiful, but that was not what was wanted. Where the water occurred, the high cliffs softened the sun's glare, so that it shone with a sort of mysterious gloom over the dark green tropical foliage. It was amid such cliffs that King had found the cascades; but they were all dry now, and only the crevices in the sandstone strata marked where they had formerly flowed. Amid such shady ravines and cool sandstone grottos, Grey searched for a landing-place until the 5th. He found one at last. It was a narrow gorge, bound by high cliffs, and sheltering a limpid stream. The chasm looked like a street, for it was little more than two chains wide, and seemed even narrower from the height of the cliffs. It was about four miles long. Many branch ravines ran out on each side, differing only from the main valley in being narrower. They were all well grassed.

By the 10th December, all the stores were landed, and

the schooner started to Timor for the ponies. Grey then made a preliminary exploration into the interior. To facilitate the comprehension of these explorations, it must be again repeated, that this part of the coast is one where the tableland abuts upon the ocean. It is a soft ferruginous sandstone, upon which the sea and fresh water act readily. Thus chasms, and ravines, and gorges are cut out, some of them no wider than the necessities of the stream require; others, due, no doubt, to the force with which they were upheaved. Grey found, as he ascended the ravine, that the walls became higher and higher, until, at last, they formed grand precipices on each side between 300 and 400 feet high. It was not easy to find a path to the top of such cliffs; but with some difficulty Grey got to the summit of the tableland. It was a sandy forest, where lofty trees spread their foliage above, and the cruel spinifex grass expanded its prickles below. The tableland had been higher at one time. Grey found upon its summit isolated pillars of sandstone, all of the same height. The mode in which the surrounding rock had been cut away was very easily explained. Underneath the surface there were innumerable water-channels for the drainage of the tropical rains, and these had cut passages like galleries, divided into caves or separated by pillars of sandstone. The tableland was also much cut into by ravines, which caused the party a good deal of descending and climbing. Thus travelling up and down, they reached to where the pillars of sandstone, on the summit, united to form another cliff, and then they found that their journey would be over a series of terraces before they got to the interior. In returning, they were attacked by the natives, and though no blood was shed on either side, they got an idea of the character of these savages, whose hostility has been testified by every explorer.

Another expedition was made on the 6th January, to examine the land lying between Port George the Fourth and Hanover Bay. It consisted of a low neck of rock which connects the peninsula with the main. It is bounded on the two sides by the sea, and on the land

side by cliffs; with a narrow terrace which runs along them in the direction of Camden Sound.

The *Lynher* returned with the ponies on the 17th January, and they were soon landed. The next few days were occupied in breaking them in to the pack-saddles. But here commenced the troubles and fatalities of the expedition. The animals were found very difficult to manage, and, what was worse, the climate seemed to affect them. They commenced to sicken and die very fast, and a similar result occurred among the sheep. In the midst of these troubles, the rainy season set in. The weather became wet and stormy. Deluges of rain fell every day with thunder-storms, such as are only seen in a tropical climate. The torrent by which the party were encamped swelled rapidly. At first, a fallen tree served as a bridge, but this was soon swept away, and both men and animals were confined to one side of the valley. Then was seen, in all its magnificence, the effect of rain upon the crevices, caves and galleries of the sandstone. Cascades poured forth from the whole faces of the cliffs, tearing down the brush-wood, and falling with a constant roar; often bringing over huge blocks of stone, which tumbled, crashing like thunder, into the valley. Amid such scenes, Grey was obliged to sit down inactive in the camp, while every day brought dismal intelligence of some new deaths among the sheep and horses.

At last, he was able to make a start. From the very reduced number of his ponies, a great deal of the stores had to be left behind; and even with the lessened loads the poor weakened animals could scarcely be made to get along. Some died under their burdens; others lay down, and no exertions could get them on their feet again. As a last resource, another reduction was made in the baggage, and half was sent on at a time. Thus they proceeded until the 11th January, trying to cross the tableland. It was the custom of Grey to go in advance, with two companions, to mark out the line they were to follow. While he was thus engaged, and far beyond the main party, the natives made an attack upon him. It was easy for them to conceal themselves be-

hind the sandstone pillars until their prey were fairly within their toils, so that they came upon the explorers like a thunder-clap, and in a moment surrounded them. There was no mistaking their intentions, and no time for parley. Grey fired one shot over their heads, but that did not intimidate them. Spears came flying round thick and fast, and the men could scarcely shelter themselves behind the rocks. Grey fired again, this time with greater effect, for the ball shattered the arm of one of the foremost. Still the savages pressed on. One of Grey's companions was in such an abject state of terror, that the gun fell powerless from his hands. The rifle of the other had become entangled in its case, and he could not use it. Both barrels of the leader were now discharged, and no help was at hand. The shower of spears continued. One struck the stock of Grey's gun and broke it; another glanced along his back. It was a position that would have made any one bold. Tearing the cover from the rifle with the strength of despair, he stood upon a rock, to take a deadly aim. In a moment he was stricken down. Three spears struck him at once. The savages gave a yell of triumph, and came on brandishing their clubs. Maddened by pain and despair Grey was on his feet again in a moment, and rushed towards them. It was now their turn to be afraid, and they broke and fled. Singling out the leader, Grey took deadly aim. The savage yelled, and flourished his arms, dodging all the while from rock to rock. But it was of no avail. The ball struck him between his shoulders as he ran, and he fell upon his face with a groan. This terminated the battle. The savages quickly carried off their companion, and disappeared as mysteriously as they had come.

Poor Grey was badly wounded. Fortunately for him, only one of the three spears had taken any serious effect, and this had given him a pretty deep wound upon the hip. This circumstance decided the fate of the expedition. It was hopeless now to think of carrying the exploration overland to Swan River. With the reduced number of the ponies, their weakened state, and the small supplies taken, it would have been nearly impos-

sible; but now that the leader was wounded, it was quite out of the question. All he could hope to do was, to explore a little way inland as soon as he was partly recovered; and for this purpose he sent to detain the schooner. On the 27th February, he was able to move on again. During his illness a path had been discovered over the tableland by a course to the westward, and thus they advanced more easily. This was a very lucky circumstance, because the number of ponies was now reduced to fourteen, and they were so enfeebled that even with a small load they could not overcome the most trifling obstacle. At last they crossed the first portion of the tableland, and stood on the edge of a precipitous descent. From the summit the view was beautiful. A fertile plain was succeeded to the southward by a low, luxuriant country, which, for thirty or forty miles, was broken only by conical peaks and rounded hills, all richly grassed to their summits. The plains and hills were lightly timbered, and apparently watered by many winding streams.

Over these fertile plains and richly grassed valleys the party travelled for many days. Nothing could be more rich than the nature of the soil, and nothing could be more umbrageous than the tropical vegetation. There was no scarcity of water, for streams seemed to abound on every side; and, as for grass, it was so luxuriant that the men were hidden from one another in its long waving tufts at the bottom of the valleys. Thus they were able to make a very easy journey. If the tropical heat were too great at mid-day, they easily found shady cool spots to rest under, and the volcanic soil supported a herbage which it was impossible for the animals to do otherwise than well upon.

Amid these meandering streams and cool bowers of foliage a very large river was met with, flowing to the westward. It was a noble channel where the party came upon it, about four miles wide, and with many pretty shady islands in its channels. The immense width of this stream made Grey most enthusiastic, and he thought he had made the discovery of a very large river, perhaps the largest in Australia, which would conduct,

probably, to the interior of the continent. He was, however, quite mistaken in this. As a rule in Australia, rivers with very broad channels have a very short course, and proceed from high mountains near, down which the sudden and heavy rains of the climate descend in streams too impetuous for a narrow channel, and too violent to be very lasting. Grey found it so on this occasion. He had not gone far up its banks before he saw that its navigation was impeded by rapids, and a little beyond the main stream divided into many channels, the widest of which was not more than sixty yards across. But it took a long time to ascertain these facts. The stream was overgrown with jungle, so that it was a matter of hard labour to advance, and then the jungle was intercepted by boggy tributaries of the river, or else by marshes which could not be crossed. A small amount of rain seemed to have a surprising effect upon this country. The river rose marvellously after a night's wet, and the drift-wood, reeds, and dead grass lodged in the bamboos, fifteen feet above the water level, showed what it might have been at other times. Such a place could not be called healthy, and what was wanting in the marsh *miasma*, would be made up by the natives, to render the locality uninhabitable. Mr. Lushington shot a kind of boa-constrictor in the long grass, just as it had succeeded in crushing a young kangaroo within its sinuous folds.

All these things were peculiarities of the first valley they had met upon the tableland. At the end of it was another sandstone ridge, lofty and precipitous; too lofty, indeed, and too craggy not to cost them a great deal of time to get the ponies on the top of it. And it was only a narrow ridge after all. Before they could get any further, there were other precipices to get down. At the foot of these there was a beautiful valley about three miles wide, and on the further side a cascade could be seen falling amid a dark forest. Beyond this rose more of the tableland, and now they recognised that for some time at least their course could only be across a succession of gorges. However, they got down into the valley. It was no easy matter, but still they made a path by

cutting down trees, and pushing aside some huge blocks of stone. The country was then beautiful for a while, with much rich grass, and many pleasant little bubbling streams rolling over the turf. All round the ravines, splashing cascades tumbled down in streaks of white spray over the dark green trees. Along such a valley, and over such ranges, the explorers continued. It is needless to chronicle their daily difficulties. Sometimes these were sandstone ranges; sometimes their course was over basaltic undulations of rock, jutting out into peaks and ridges of volcanic stone, as it does on the edge of the table-land all round Australia.

At last their progress was stopped. The sandstone ridge rose into cliffs which were found to be quite impassable. Grey travelled along it for about three miles; but throughout this distance it presented no single pass through which they could penetrate. They did not, however, like to turn back without a careful search. The sandstone range was found terminated on every side by fearfully precipitous rocks, at the foot of which lay fertile valleys, like the ones they had already seen.

Finding the sandstone range impracticable, Grey thought he should be able to get round it by a passage to the westward. For this purpose, the party went back upon their route until they had come within reach of the tributaries of the large river, named the Glenelg. Grey's progress was then very slow, for his course was badly chosen; that is to say, along the entrances of the gorges down which the tributary streams find a channel. Thus his path for many days was along ledges of rocks and across small streams; at one time, having to trace a channel for some distance to find a ford; at another, floundering through a morass, in which the ponies were almost submerged; yet, in spite of all the difficulties, he was constantly enraptured with the scenery. The lofty red cliffs, the bright green of the valleys, the climbing bamboo, the tall pandanus, and the shining tropical foliage, all came in for a share of his admiration. The scenery indeed must have been beautiful to excite such praise from a man circumstanced as Grey was: but still a pass through the ranges could

not be found, and as the provisions were getting low, it was determined to return to the schooner. Before doing so, he sent Lieutenant Lushington to explore to the southward. After a rapid march, the latter returned on the 3rd of April. He had only proceeded about eighteen miles. The whole of the route lay over a country utterly impassable for the horses. They crossed a number of very steep ravines, with streams in them flowing to the westward. Their last point was a lofty mountain, from which they could see nothing to the southward but a continuation of the hills and ravines. The country seemed to rise to the eastward.

Near the furthest point which Grey reached, some remarkable painted figures were found on the walls of two sandstone caves. They were much better executed than anything that the natives are able to do now, and their antiquity seems to be unquestionable. Some of the figures were dressed in robes reaching down to the feet, and both hands and feet were painted a deeper red than the rest of the body; the face was draped in white, with holes left for the eyes, and all had a double ring round the head like the *aureole* of a modern saint. Three colours were used—red, blue, and yellow; and in addition to many other figures, there was a kind of writing very much like the characters in use among the natives of the Indian Archipelago. Whatever may be said of these strange drawings, it is quite certain that they refer to a time when the savages made use of clothing, and were more civilized than at present they are. Near one of the caves, a very good profile of a man's head was cut out deeply in the rock: the type of the head was not Australian, and was well executed. The natives seemed to be very fond of these places as an encampment, and in that respect they resembled all the painted caves found upon the west, north, and north-east coast.*

* These painted caves are well worthy of further investigation. In South America between 2° and 4° N. lat. the granitic and syenitic rocks are covered with colossal symbolical figures of crocodiles, tigers, and human figures about twelve feet in height. The head-gear is extremely remarkable. It surrounds the head, and spreads far out not unlike (according to Sir R. Schomburgk) the glory round the heads of saints. Many other interesting

Grey returned to Hanover Bay on the 16th of April. Here he met with Captain Wickham, in the *Beagle*; and though the coast had been carefully surveyed to the westward, nothing had been seen of the Glenelg River; its direction was towards Collier's Bay, of which only one small portion was left unexplored; and this instance is one of many which could be furnished of the insufficiency of marine surveys for the purpose of discovering rivers. Grey's expedition was now at an end. On the 17th of May, the *Lynher* returned. The ponies were turned loose upon the coast, and then all further hopes of exploring with them was abandoned. In reflecting on the results of this expedition, it may be considered a failure. The slight insight into the interior was, however, interesting, and reminded one forcibly of the early attempts upon the Blue Mountains. It would be very desirable to know what was the character of the country on the southern side of the watershed. The country must be good, and no doubt is watered by some fine streams flowing for a considerable distance to the southward. It is so on every other part of the tableland; and here, where the land is so elevated, there can be no exception. To ascertain the fact, however, an approach would be better made from the southward; for experience has taught explorers that it is far more easy to traverse immense tracts of the level interior than a narrow belt of the sandstone ravines. As a settlement, the Glenelg is worthy of attention, though the country is very limited, and would perhaps be unhealthy.

When Grey reached the Swan, he was employed for a few weeks in exploring amid the Darling Range; that is, the tableland at the back of Port Leschenault. Nothing now resulted from this journey; but his testimony was added to that of other explorers, as to the worthless character of the interior of the land away from the rivers.

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analogies with the Australian caves will be found in "Reisen in Guiana und am Orinoko übersetzt von Otto Schomburgk." Berlin 1841. Also, "Archæologia Britannica," Vol. V. 1779, pp. 318-324, and Vol. VI. 1782, p. 107.

CHAPTER XXIII.

GREY UPON THE WEST COAST.

Grey starts again—Sharks Bay—Dreadful storm—The Gascoyne River—The West Coast—Detention by bad weather—Return to the depôt—Robbery by the natives—Return to the Swan—Shipwreck of the crew—The Murchison River—The Arrowsmith—Other western streams—Dreadful sufferings—Arrival at Perth.

CAPTAIN GREY could not remain at home idle; exploration had such charms for him that he was restless to get away again. Before long, he had succeeded in organizing another party, on a scheme far more wild than the plan with which he set out from England. He provided himself with three whale-boats, and stores for six months, for a party of thirteen; and what he proposed to do was as follows:—He was to be taken as far as Sharks Bay in a whaling vessel, and then he intended to make one of the islands his central depôt. Here he would bury his stores, while he made either occasional journeys inland, or coasted along the shore in his boats. In this manner he intended to work his way slowly back to Perth. The scheme was as mad and wild as it could well be. To depend upon whale-boats upon an unknown coast was bad enough; but to have no assistance from any vessel, and to be left upon a desolate island to work their way back how they could, seemed sheer insanity. The issue was quite in keeping with the plan. It was a train of disasters from beginning to end.

On the 25th February, 1839, the party were landed with their stores upon Bernier Island, the most northern part of the peninsula which encloses Sharks Bay. Their troubles commenced at the very landing. No search had been made previously as to what was

the nature of the country, and scarcely had the vessel gone out of sight when they discovered that the island was totally unprovided with water. They searched and dug in all directions, but in vain; the island was a mere barren plateau of red sandstone, very scrubby, and presenting high cliffs to the ocean for the greater part of its coast line. Dorre Island was then searched, and some of the provisions carried over to it. In doing so, one of the whale-boats was caught in the surf and dashed to pieces, and all its cargo lost. This was rather a disheartening commencement; but worse was before them. Dorre Island was as desolate and barren as its neighbour. Not a drop of water was to be found on any part of its surface. They would have crossed immediately to the main on making this discovery, but the weather was unfavourable. Here was a position! Their only supply of water was the cask they took with them from the whaling vessel, and unless they soon got across to a more favourable locality, they must perish with thirst at the very commencement of their expedition. And matters did not improve. While they were waiting, a frightful storm arose—a perfect hurricane, which sent both boats ashore, and scattered the contents as if they had been mere playthings. Thus all their provisions were damaged by salt water, and the two boats were complete wrecks. Nor was this the whole. During the night of the terrible hurricane, the men were obliged to swim backwards and forwards to the boats, in the hopes of saving their cargo, and thus, in addition to the loss, their strength was weakened, and poor Grey as much shaken in constitution as if the expedition had lasted a year.

Instead of being able now to cross to the other side of the bay, they had first to mend their boats. Some days were spent in patching them up, for a complete repair was out of the question; and then they launched again upon the water. Before leaving Bernier Island, they had buried the greater part of their provisions, intending to return for them as soon as they found some better depôt. The day was fine, and as they made for the distant coast, scarcely a ripple disturbed the water.

With all its disadvantages, the place was not without a natural beauty of its own when the sea was calm. The hills of the main, though low, were covered with a dark vegetation to their summits, and the cliffy parts of the shore, by their reflection in the water, seemed lengthened into fine, bold rocky headlands. Amid such scenes the day wore on, and Grey almost forgot his recent privations. The evening closed upon them before they could see where to bring the boat, so they anchored in a very shallow place. What was their surprise next morning, to find themselves aground in a forest. They had anchored at high tide among the mangroves which form so thick a fringe round the shore. They managed, however, to flounder through the mud flats for about two miles, until they got to the scrubby sand-hills of the shores. There they discovered what terminated their anxieties for a time. Three miles from the beach there was a lagoon of fresh water.

All these transactions occupied until the 5th of March, and, as yet, they had done nothing in the way of exploration. Now, however, they would commence in earnest, for their minds were easy on the subject of water. Standing out from the shore on the 6th with a fresh breeze, they soon were on deep ocean again. The coast had a cheerless aspect. There was no high land visible all round—nothing in fact, but mangroves. These were run in at intervals by inlets and salt-water creeks, every one of which was hailed as a river by the boat's crew until they had explored it. Grey made sure he should find some important stream in this bay, for Dorre Island was covered with drift timber, and the mangroves looked as if they were disturbed at times by freshes from the land side.

Their anticipations were soon realized. While running northwards upon the coast, they discovered a large opening, about three-quarters of a mile broad and widening into deep reaches. This was a river beyond a doubt. When they had ascended about three miles, they found abundance of drift timber in the bed, and from the size of the trees it was evident that they had come from a country differing very much from the low

scrubby sand-hills of the coast. The channel, however, soon became choked with shallows and sandbanks, until, at six miles from the mouth, there was not more than a few inches of water. This was very annoying, for it was certain that the stream must continue a long distance inland; but with no means of transport, except the boats, Grey felt quite unable to attempt its exploration. At any rate, he would trace its course a little further; so, leaving his party at a suitable encampment, he commenced to follow the windings of the river on foot. Its banks, when he started, were about five feet high, and the channel half a mile wide, containing only salt water. By-and-by, this character changed—the banks became higher, and the stream more narrow, with many side channels. Grey followed it for four miles without finding the slightest subsequent alteration. It was in vain that he walked over the intervening strips of land into the side channels; they resembled the main one in all respects; and after ranging for some time backwards and forwards, the only conclusion he could come at was, that the river seemed to come from a long distance; that the north banks were scrubby and covered by a samphire swamp; and that the south bank contained some very rich and promising land. Its inhabitants were few. Some natives were seen—shy and timid, like all the savages about this part of the coast. How many there were could not be told, for they took the precaution of walking in each other's footsteps, so that their number could not be guessed from their tracks. Two, however, were seen. Grey also thought he saw an alligator; it was lying, as he imagined, asleep amid a small clump of trees. It was approached with caution, and when near enough, Grey fired two balls into its body. It only gave a kind of shake, and continued its slumbers. Another shot was fired, and then the stench told the explorers plainly that no ammunition would ever wake it again. It was a huge blue shark, in a high state of decomposition, and it had done its last mischief in this world when it frightened and perfumed the explorers.

Grey made other explorations about this river, which

he named the Gascoyne, but without discovering anything new. It came from the north-east, and was evidently an important stream, but he only saw an immense delta of alluvial soil, surrounded by sand-hills. Occasionally, he found water-holes, eighteen or twenty feet deep, surrounded by tea trees, and nearly all dried up. He had satisfied himself of these facts, and left the river, intending to return to it when he had obtained a fresh supply of provisions from his depôt on Bernier Island. This, it will be seen, he was not able to do. The river was not explored again until 1858, when it was found that it proceeded from the tableland more than a hundred miles inland, and receives in its course many important tributaries.

The whale-boats again put out to sea, and steered along the coast northward. In a little time, the sand dunes ceased, and the land appeared very little elevated above the horizon. Towards evening the boats had run twenty-five miles, and Grey looked about for a harbour in which to anchor for the night. But nothing of the kind could he perceive. The sand-hills had again arisen, and exposed a bleak and desolate rampart to a broad line of foaming breakers. Meanwhile the wind freshened, and the danger of the boats increased. They could not venture to remain out much longer, so bad the surf looked; and they turned towards the shore. They were soon caught in the swell. One by one they careened over the curling green walls of lashing surf, and at last grounded on a sandbank, about two hundred yards from the shore. They were very soon pulled over this, and anchored for the night in a comparatively smooth basin. Then they were safe. But how they were to get out to sea again was a question which perplexed them all. They passed a miserable night. Their provisions were bad and unwholesome. The flour had been continually saturated with salt water ever since the storm on Dorre Island, and was almost uneatable; but they had nothing else. Fortunately they did not want water, for a well was found close to the beach, and the men were employed in filling the kegs.

In the meantime, Grey walked over the sand-hills

to ascertain the nature of the inland country. The view surprised and delighted him. There he saw a most beautiful lake, calm and unruffled, with many charming islands, diversifying the scene with their gentle wooded slopes. The water seemed to extend as far as the eye could reach. Grey made sure that it was a fresh-water lake. Its limpid appearance told him so, and thinking that he had made a great discovery, he returned with the joyful tidings to his companions. They were overjoyed at the news, and wanted at once to drag a boat over the hills, to launch upon the peaceful waters. Grey, however, thought it more prudent to explore a path first. He took with him a great number of the men, and went down towards the edge of the inland lake. It was not so easily reached. When the men had walked a mile or so, they found themselves upon a marshy flat, covered with sea shells and lumps of coral. The lake seemed still as distant as ever. No one doubted that its margin must be very near, so they toiled on. The islands were visible, and looked beautiful, but they were no nearer, and the water seemed to recede before them. Then they looked back. The truth broke upon them at once. As much water appeared behind them as in front, and the dreary sand-hills looked in their turn like pretty wooded islands. The whole was due to refraction, and they were standing far advanced upon a dismal salt marsh, which had only recently been inundated by the sea.

Disheartened and weary, they returned to the coast. The wind in the meantime had risen, and a huge foaming surf upon the shore told them that they were prisoners. Day after day they waited, but no change came except for the worse. It was madness to think of launching the boats against such large and such angry waves, so they could only sit and watch, with a terrible foreboding of their fate. Their position was a very trying one. The provisions were becoming daily more scanty, and were so unwholesome that some of the men became seriously ill. To add to their miseries, the natives made a daring attack upon the boats, carrying off a great many things, and wounding one man. Poor

Grey was in a sad state of mind. At first, he was able to employ himself drawing his maps and writing the journal; but after these employments he could only pace up and down the beach all night, and gloomily brood upon his sad position.

At last, the wind moderated, and the boats were launched again on the 18th March. But that day closed stormily, and they were obliged to rush again through surf, and beach the boats, for how long they could not tell, but if as long as the last detention, they would certainly be starved. The next day turned out fine. The boats were again afloat. The wind still blew from the southward, and there was a heavy sea running, but the men exerted all their energies, and just before sunset they reached the northern mouth of the Gascoyne. After this, very little impeded their passage back to Bernier Island. They could now hope for fresh food, and with their dearly bought experience they might expect to conduct the expedition more successfully. But a new and terrible disappointment awaited them, and all that they had hitherto endured was nothing to the crushing misfortune which ensued. While Grey was arranging the boats, two of the men went up to the cask, to see whether it had been disturbed. Grey followed, and found them perfectly stupefied with terror, while they pointed to signs upon the ground which he understood but too plainly. The natives had been there, and nearly all their provisions either carried off or destroyed.

It was a fearful position. One hundredweight of meat, and sixty pounds of flour was all they had to depend upon. The cruel savages had not only carried away what they wanted, but they had destroyed as much as they could, so that the ground was strewed with flour and wasted food. These signs the thirteen haggard men gazed upon with mingled feelings of anger and despair. At first they showed some signs of insubordination, but the firmness of Grey brought them back to their duty. He told them that their safety depended upon obeying his orders, and that if they would be patient and docile, he would guarantee to bring them all in safety to Perth.

Bold promises, certainly, under the circumstances, but the sequel showed that he was right. The men believed him, and silently commenced to take their crazy boats out into the ocean again.

Grey had first thought of making for Timor or Port Essington, but a little consideration showed him that it would be far better to make for Swan River. He only returned for water to the Gascoyne, and on the 24th March sailed to the southward. The shore, as usual, was low and uninteresting. A small range of hills extended back a mile or so, and fronting this was a dreary area of mangroves. The journey was a series of adventures. On the first night they anchored in a snug little bay, and, as on the first occasion, found themselves in the morning encamped amid a leafy green wood, for they had cast their anchor, at high tide, amid the mangroves. The next night they were overtaken by a storm, under the lee of Perron Peninsula, and it was as much as the men could do to save themselves from being capsized. When they started again, they were soon obliged to return from the violence of the weather, and this happened every day until the 30th. Their camp meanwhile was under the sandstone cliffs of the peninsula. On the narrow slip of sand they were obliged to listen, day after day, to the booming of the waves, and see chances of escape gradually slipping out of their way.

On the day just named, they got away. For the next hundred and twenty miles they could not hope to beach the boats. It would, in the weak state of the party, take many days to make this passage, and should the weather be foul, accompanied by strong gales, their fate would be decided. The men talked in an undertone to each other, and grew more and more gloomy. They wanted to go ashore, and finally they became insubordinate. Again Grey's firmness and courage brought them to their duty, and they worked on. On the 31st, they continued along the shore. A small portion of raw damper was served out to each man, but it was rest they wanted, not food. Grey looked upon their emaciated faces, and began to fear for the safety of all if

they continued much longer at sea. In an evil hour he resolved to try land again. The shore was most uninviting. A high line of perfectly level cliffs formed the background. They were stony, lonely looking features, uneven in front, and scarred by dark rugged gorges. Before them was a small limestone range, even and lightly timbered. In contrast with this was the large rolling walls of troubled water, which rose so high at times as to hide everything. It seemed certain destruction to make towards the white line of spray on the beach, but Grey turned his boat's head in. The waves hurried past them at first, until the boat caught the impetus. At last, it glided up a slope of green water, and seemed to rest for a while amid the slightly breaking froth. For an instant it was hurried along with the speed of lightning. The wave hid everything, but Grey could only hope for the best, and keep on. In another moment the water circled, stopped for a moment, and broke, and they were dashed upon the ground like mere playthings.

The rest of the dismal story is soon told. The second boat in beaching also became a complete wreck, and the carpenters declared their utter inability to repair either of them, so as to float again, even supposing that they could get a chance of launching them through the frightful surf. There was only one chance now left, and that was to try reach Perth on foot. It was a pity that they had attempted to land. With a fair wind they might have reached the Swan in three or four days, now they could scarcely hope to do so in as many weeks. The place where they were cast ashore was found to be a beautiful piece of country, near the mouth of a small river, which Grey named the Murchison. From this they made rapid journeys. But an unexpected difficulty soon arose. Some of the men insisted on carrying with them a large amount of useless lumber, such as sail-cloth, rope, old clothes, &c., and no persuasion would induce them to abandon their loads. The consequences may be guessed. Weak and exhausted as they were, and on such a scanty allowance of food, they could not carry their burdens long,

and soon the majority began to clamour for shorter stages. Grey argued and implored, but they turned a deaf ear to his entreaties. He pointed out that their only chance of safety lay in getting on while strength remained; but all to no purpose. Finding that some of the men had exhausted themselves, and could not travel fast even with or without baggage, he offered to go rapidly on with one or two followers, and to send back assistance if he could succeed in reaching the settled districts. The others joyfully assented to this, for though starvation stared them in the face, they had no energy to avoid it. Grey therefore pushed on.

His journey was a terrible one. The flour was soon exhausted, and he gives heart-rending accounts of the sufferings he endured for want of food. The provisions of some of his companions lasted a longer time, and Grey relates how one man shared a piece of damaged damper with him about the size of a walnut, and how he showed his gratitude next evening by dividing with his benefactor the entrails of a hawk he had shot. But this was only a part of their sufferings. They could find no water, and it is horrible to think of the substitute they were driven to in their agony of thirst. The country passed through was almost a solitude. Only once did natives appear to try to oppose their passage, and those were easily dispersed. But when the natives disappeared, it was a fatal indication of the sterile character of the country they were passing through. Not even birds or animals of any kind could they meet with. Two or three days were passed without nourishment of any sort, then a crow, a hawk, or some weeds, would stave off starvation for a time. At length they reached Perth, but so worn, emaciated and reduced, that it was impossible to recognise them; and yet twenty-one days had done this; for Grey arrived in Perth on the 21st April, and the boats were wrecked on the 31st March. Immediate succours were sent out to those who were coming on behind, but they were too late for one of them. A lad, named Smyth, had been left in a dying state, and was found stretched lifeless among some bushes. He was dreadfully emaciated, but had died,

apparently, without much suffering. Mr. Walker, the surgeon, had pushed on, and had arrived in Perth by himself, and the three remaining were found at the foot of a cliff on the sea-coast, having given up all hopes of crossing it, from their utter inability to climb. They had subsisted principally on shell-fish, and by chewing rushes, and had they not providentially found a cask of water washed up on the beach, they must have perished of thirst. When found by Surveyor-General Roe, they had been three days without water, and they had preserved in their canteen a loathsome substitute to assuage their burning thirst.

The results of this latter journey were, in some degree, important. Eight rivers were found to the south of the Murchison, but none of any size. They were named, in the order of finding them, the Chapman, the Greenough, the Irwin, the Arrowsmith, and the Smith. Probably none, except the Arrowsmith, seemed to deserve the appellation of more than creeks. Two mountain ranges were discovered, one at the northern extremity of the Darling Range, which at this point is north and south, and called Moresby's Flat-topped Range (of King). Another range was found to be thrown off in a westerly direction from the Darling Range. It is about forty miles long, from north to south, and is barren and sterile, terminating in Mounts Perron and Leseuer. This was called Gardiner's Range. Grey described an extensive district of fine fertile country between the Victoria Range (the one to the east of Moresby's Range) and the sea. This he named the Province of Victoria, and the country round the Gascoyne the Province of Babbage. Another district near Perth was found to contain three rivers besides the Moore, which were not previously known, namely, the Hill, the Smith, and the Norcott. They seemed to drain Gardiner's Range.

After Mr. Grey's return, Mr. G. F. Moore (the same who discovered the Moore River) was sent to examine the country from the sea in the vicinity of Moresby's Range. He reported favourably of a bay he found,

and a point to the south was named Point Grey; the port received the same name.

It may be as well to mention here, however, that Captain Stokes visited the same locality shortly after, and gave the port the name of Champion Bay. He quite disproved the existence of any fertile land, with the exception of a small patch in the valley of the Greenough. The country around, on the contrary, was of a most sterile and useless description. This report arrived in time to prevent a disastrous attempt at establishing a settlement there, and great credit is due to the authorities for causing Stokes's examination before any investment had been made in the land. Grey's mistake is easily accounted for. In the famishing state in which he was, his judgment could hardly be relied upon; and when it is remembered that he had just come through a tract of frightful country without one drop of water, the sight of a river and a little green grass may easily have made him imagine that the country was of better quality than it deserved to be considered.

CHAPTER XXIV.

STOKES AND WICKHAM'S DISCOVERIES.

The Fitzroy River—The Adelaide River—The Victoria—The Fitzmaurice—The Albert—The Flinders—Discoveries by the Cedar Sawyers—The M'Leay—The Clarence—Other rivers.

THE readers will doubtless remember that when Grey returned from his survey of the Glenelg, near Hanover Bay, he was met by Captain Wickham, of the *Beagle*. This was the vessel in which he had come out from the Cape, and it was arranged that it should visit Hanover Bay, to render assistance to the explorers. That portion of its operation has been already related, but previously some valuable discoveries had been made upon the north coast, and these remain to be described.

When Captain King had been upon the north-west coast, he had noticed an opening to the eastward of Point Cunningham which he had not been able to examine, owing to the loss of his anchors. Into this opening Stokes was sent to explore, with two boats, in February, 1838. For the first two nights he anchored off the coast, but as he proceeded several circumstances made him believe that he was approaching the mouth of a considerable river. The water deepened near the coast, and large trees were passed occasionally, drifting out to sea. As to the nature of the coast they could say nothing of that, for it was as yet level as the ocean. They landed upon the only vacant spot visible thereabouts, and that was a mere sand-bar of the stream, left dry at high water. This was in lat. 17° 5′; and from the highest tree near, Stokes could see nothing but mangroves and mud banks. But if the land was vacant,

the air was not. Stokes and his companions tried in vain to sleep by a camp fire which they made, but sleep, or even rest, was out of the question. The mosquitoes were the largest and fiercest they had ever seen, and they earned for the locality the name of Point Torment. Twenty miles further, they saw the mouth of the river, but it was quite unapproachable. It seemed to be almost closed by a bar, over which the tide was boiling furiously, while the waters swept by them with fearful rapidity. This was in the evening. In the night the return tide came up with a wave which nearly upset the boats, and the place was named, in consequence, Escape Point.

With the tide, Stokes proceeded up the stream in the whale-boat, but from Point Escape there seemed no regular channel: the bed of the river became an extensive flat of mangroves, intersected by small streams in every direction. The country around was a dead level. Finding it impossible to take the boat further, Stokes landed with two men to return on foot to Point Escape, while the boat went down one of the channels. The flat was a soft mud, and their journey soon became very fatiguing because of the numerous creeks they had to cross. The tide was rising, and the creeks were becoming wider and wider. At first, they managed to jump across, but each jump required a greater exertion. At last, they reached one they could not jump, and as one of the party could not swim they were obliged to wait and make signals to the boat. It was a long time before they could make their companions hear, and meanwhile the water had risen up to their knees. It was coming up very fast—faster, unfortunately, than the boat, which had some difficulty in making headway against the tide. They made tremendous efforts, and so did the tide; and they were compelled to anchor above the three unfortunate explorers, who were now up to their arm-pits in water. Stokes waved his arms, and encouraged them. Another desperate effort was made, and again they were compelled to anchor to keep their ground. The cries of the struggling man as the water reached his neck nerved the boatmen for a fresh effort,

which saved Stokes and his companions. When they again visited the spot, on looking down through the water Stokes saw an alligator crawling through the mud where he had been standing. This was undoubtedly Escape Point.

The party now returned to the ship for fresh supplies and more assistance, and on the 7th March Captain Wickham returned with Stokes to Mangrove Islands. Before proceeding up the stream they made a short excursion into the interior. It was like all the river flats, and especially reminds one of the river country first surveyed by Captain King. Wide, unbroken plains, covered with wiry grass, met their gaze on every side. Everything was dry and burned up, and the few solitary trees which started up here and there only tended to make the loneliness more mournful. It wanted only sunset to make the scene all of a piece. The river, three miles wide, the low banks, the salt marshes, and the open plains, seemed under a fading light, like a farewell of fertility to creation. A few natives were seen upon the low grassy banks. They lay perfectly still, with their heads just raised above the ground, listening with alarm to the plash of the oars amid the grave-like silence of the waters. So intent were they in watching the first boat that they allowed the second to come very close to them, and then they gave a yell, and ran terrified into the plains.

The Fitzroy preserved a very uniform character, as far as it was traced. The banks became well wooded at a short distance from the sea, and the width of the stream grew rapidly narrower. At twenty-two miles in a direct south-east line from the opening, it was still of moderate width, but was so choked up with dead timber and islets that Wickham could follow it no further. Like all Australian streams, it was a collection of shallows and deep reaches, and seemed very liable to extensive floods. It has never been since explored, but there can be no doubt that it will yet be found to be a most important feature on the north-west coast.

From the date of this discovery until July, 1839, the

Beagle discovered nothing new. At that time she arrived at Port Essington, which had been colonized under Sir Gordon Bremer the year previously. But little had been done in the way of exploration. Lieutenant Stewart had explored on the east side of Coburg Peninsula, and he had found an immense number of buffaloes in wild herds.* Abundance of fresh water was found, but the party was only absent eight days. While the *Beagle* was surveying near Cape Hotham, an opening was found in the neighbourhood leading to a river named after the good Queen Adelaide. This was traced through a fertile and level country for eighty miles, when it divided into two branches, one too narrow for boats and the other blocked up by fallen trees. It has since been perhaps explored by Mr. Stuart, and was probably met by that traveller after crossing the Roper. By means of its channel he stated that he was enabled to succeed in his third attempt to cross the continent from north to south. The waters are fresh, and for the first fifteen miles fringed with mangroves. Higher up the banks were thickly wooded but very level. It swarmed with alligators during its whole course.

But the most important discovery made by the *Beagle's* crew was the Victoria River, in the opening between Point Pearce and Cambridge Gulf, which King was unable to examine. Captain Wickham was more fortunate than his predecessor. Not being short of anchors, and under no anxiety about his ship, he steered boldly in to the bottom of the bay. It was a fine opening: the lofty tableland broke into high, rugged cliffs on either side, and in the distance could be seen those turretted flat summits whose escarpments had reminded King so much of fortifications. Two openings were found at the bottom of the bay—one small, named the Fitzmaurice, on the south-east side, and one very large, on the south. This was the Victoria River. It

* These animals had been imported from Timor, when the settlement was at Port Raffles. They have increased wonderfully since, and form very large herds upon the north coast; they are larger than the domestic cattle, and a little coarser in the flesh, but may be easily tamed, and would form a valuable addition to a tropical farm.

was evidently a very important stream, much larger indeed than any hitherto found upon the north coast. It ran through a very wide valley bounded by a high line of cliffs. The summit of these cliffs was an immense sandstone plateau. Thus it appeared that the course was through a break in the great sandstone tableland. The low lands were not very fertile at first: they were fringed with mangroves, and covered with a salt incrustation, and here and there were scattered clumps of drift timber, showing that sometimes considerable inundations flowed across the plains. In the cliffs the strata were well marked, and dipping to the south-east at an angle of about 30°. Their base and sides were thickly strewn with small fragments of sandstone, exactly as if they were macadamised, like a newly made road. The range was in consequence called the M'Adam Range.

The *Beagle* was easily taken more than fifty miles up the channel, but though wide and deep it was rapidly assuming the character of an Australian river. Its course was tortuous and winding, and many fine reaches of almost still water showed that the level of the bottom was very uneven. While the vessel was anchored to take in her supplies of water (not from the stream, however, for that was still brackish), Captain Wickham and Stokes went on to explore the further course in the whale-boat. The Victoria kept almost north-east, averaging three-quarters of a mile in width and twelve feet in depth. Its banks increased in richness as they moved up. Hills and tableland formed a regularly shaped background, only broken here and there by a jutting peak, while the stream kept its course well marked by a winding line of dense brushwood amid a boundless plain. At intervals were many small whirlwinds coursing each other like gaunt spectres, and throwing around them dust, leaves, and even small branches of trees.

After following the stream further than any river yet found upon the north coast, the course was stopped by a shoal. The boats were easily dragged over this, and for two miles more glided along a fine deep reach. Then another dry stony shoal occurred, and they

could see that the stream was interrupted by similar obstacles every mile or so. It was much too hot to think of dragging the boat continually over such impediments, for the thermometer stood at 100° in the shade, so the attempt at further navigation was given up. Stokes went on foot for a day's journey beyond the boat, but no new feature became visible, and the final exploration of the river was abandoned in lat. 15° 36′, at about 140 miles distant from the sea. The scenery during the latter part of the journey had been very rich and beautiful. Large palm trees and a dense brushwood of acacia had thickly lined the still glassy reaches, while their surfaces were studded with beautiful white lilies, which floated in graceful rafts all along the shady banks. The weather during the exploration was oppressively hot, though the summer season had not commenced, and the sun shone down upon the sandstone cliffs with a glare that was perfectly unendurable. Once the party met with a heavy thunder shower and gale of wind. Torrents of rain fell, which reduced the temperature in a very short time so much that the men were glad to plunge into the river to warm themselves. This was not a very safe place for them. Alligators were as common here as on any part of the north coast. Stokes succeeded in capturing one. He shot it as it lay upon the water, and, thinking that it was dead, directed his men to pass a rope round it and haul it ashore. At first it required all their strength to pull it up the banks, but suddenly they were at a loss to explain why their exertions were so much diminished. The alligator gave the explanation in person, for he was soon seen walking up the shore, evidently wanting to know who tied the rope round his leg. He was despatched at length with some difficulty, and the crew regaled themselves on alligator steaks. It is perfectly astonishing to think what some men will eat.

Very few natives were seen by the party: those that were met were thought to be peaceable, but they shunned communication. This threw the explorers off their guard, and before Stokes had left the precincts of the Victoria River he received a very severe wound

from one of their spears thrown from an ambush while he was exploring upon the beach.

The *Beagle* was employed for some time subsequently on the Australian coast, and Stokes made a few discoveries in the Gulf of Carpentaria. Van Diemen's Inlet was explored, because it was marked by the Dutch as a large opening. It was a small river, quite unnavigable. The boat could only advance nine miles, and then the mangroves were so thick that it was impossible to work through them. Disaster Inlet was a very similar opening. In fact, mangrove swamps line the coast of Carpentaria so thickly that of all the expeditions from the land not one has as yet been able to reach the sea-side. In lat. 17° 36′, however, they entered a large and promising opening. The water was deep, though the banks were lined with mangroves; behind which, on the eastern side, were plains with large trees. The river wound very much as they proceeded, so that they could not advance fast, and they were also much delayed by the tide, which only flows once in the twenty-four hours in Carpentaria. The banks became gradually more open, and the country clear and level, though shoals interrupted the course at times. The river was generally deep and wide, and kept to the southward. At about twenty miles, however, the boat grounded so often that Stokes proceeded with the gig alone. The stream became very tortuous, but the various reaches were extremely pretty. Huge trees lined the sides, and sometimes the banks broke into cliffs or swelled into lawn-like green slopes of surprising verdure for Australia. Lovely little islets were scattered over the surface of the reaches, which were broad and placid, but not very deep; and at a place where the banks were steep and overhanging with creepers, and the channel divided into two branches, Stokes returned. This was in lat. 17° 15′. The river was named the Flinders. A melancholy interest is attached to this stream, because it was the one reached by Burke and Wills when they crossed the continent in 1861, and from which they only returned to be starved to death. It has also been discovered to be the most important stream yet known

upon the north coast, more important even than the Victoria. It runs from a very long distance inland, and will be the highway yet used in traffic between Melbourne and the north coast.

Another river was found to the west of the Flinders. This was the Albert River, first seen by Lieutenant Fitzmaurice. Stokes entered the opening on the 30th July, 1840. The banks were fringed with mangroves. For three miles it was very straight, and about three hundred yards wide. The width increased as they proceeded, until it was a reach almost a mile across, studded with islands; but the depth was very slight—barely ten feet, and at no great distance from the mouth it divided into two channels. The narrowest (the Barkly) was quite unnavigable, except for boats, and that only for about twenty miles. It was quite salt. The Albert was a fine fresh stream, about two hundred yards wide, but getting much broader. Its banks were very picturesque, and the country around of the richest description. Its course was generally south-west, and the higher it was traced the more charming the scenery became. The stream kept on so well that Stokes thought he would be able by its means to reach the centre of the continent; but at seven miles further, it divided again, and all progress was stopped, for both branches were completely dammed up with dead timber. The boats were at this time about fifty miles from the entrance, and as provisions were now short, Stokes proposed to return, after spending the remainder of the day on a land excursion. Following a short woody valley, they came upon a vast boundless plain, dotted over with stumps of timber, like islands in a sea of grass. The river could be traced to the southward, but there was no sign of the west branch. The soil was rich; apparently of great depth, and very beautifully grassed. At the end of four miles they turned off to the west for a small hill, and then made the river, which was now a mere rivulet scarcely fifteen yards wide and five feet deep. It was running rather rapidly from the south. Two miles further it was quite undiminished, and its course was

traced as far as the eye could reach along the plain. Here they turned back in lat. 17° 58′ 39″ S., long. 139° 25′ E.; and the plains before them, still as boundless as ever, were named the Plains of Promise. Stokes, on leaving the spot, says—"What an admirable point of departure for exploring the interior. A few camels would effect it in a short space of time." This was the plan which ultimately succeeded in 1860, but proceeding from the other side of the continent.

This was the last discovery of the *Beagle's* crew, and to Stokes the geography of Australia owes a great deal. He would have accomplished more had he had the means. Probably, no explorer except Grey wrote such interesting accounts of his journeys.

There remain yet some important discoveries to be mentioned. It will be remembered that Oxley, in crossing the Dividing Range between the Peel River and the sea, came upon a large stream flowing northward, which he named the Apsley. This was found to be the head of a fine river named the M'Leay, which emptied itself upon the coast at Trial Bay, lat. 30° 40′. The entrance is obstructed by a bed of sand, and then succeed extensive mangrove flats, with thickets of myrtle, palm, and swamp oak, which a few miles further are superseded by a forest, rising like a green wall on each side of the river. This forest was found to contain large quantities of red cedar (*Cedrela toona*), and white cedar (*Melia azederach*), which, though very different from what is known as cedar at home, is a valuable wood, and in much request by the colonists. Accordingly, it was not long before the forest was colonized by cedar sawyers, and these, in their searches for new timber, made many valuable and important discoveries.

The first was in 1838, when the Clarence River was discovered, in looking for timber for the purposes just alluded to. This is one of the largest rivers on the east coast, and flows into Shoal Bay, in lat. 29° 30′. It comes from the main range, and receives several very large tributaries, one of which, the Ora-Ora River, rises in the Lofty Mountain. The Clarence is remarkable for its great breadth and large volume of water, considering

the short distance of its mouth from its sources. Probably it is the widest river in Australia. Its natural features and the soil upon its banks are very similar to those of the M'Leay. Like all the east coast rivers, it is obstructed by a bar, immediately within which there is a very fertile island, and, when first discovered, it abounded in emus. Many other smaller islands occur further up the stream.

To the south of the Ora-Ora there is another river, called by the native name, Bellengen. This was also found by the cedar sawyers, in 1841, who went on an expedition to discover new rivers, where they could cut cedar. Mr. Clement Hodgkinson, who was at that time surveying along the M'Leay, started overland for the new river. He found that it was divided from the former stream by seven very lofty and precipitous ranges of mountains, running east and west, between which run important streams, named, successively, the Algomerra Creek (two branches), the Nambucca River (also two branches), the Coohalli Creek (whereon the *Araucaria* appears), and the Odalberree River.

The Richmond River might have been said to have been discovered by Cook, and subsequently by Cunningham, as the former discovered the mouth, and the latter the source at Mount Lindesey. The entrance is in lat. 28° 55′ S., and has a bar. It much resembles the M'Leay, and has abundance of cedar; but altogether the stream is next to the Clarence.

The Tweed is a large salt-water inlet, next to the Richmond. It is close to Mount Warningreef, seen by Cook. A certain cedar-dealer, named Scott, about the time that the Bellengen was discovered, crossed the bar of the Tweed in a schooner of sixty tons. I have not been able to ascertain if he was the first discoverer of the inlet, the opening to which was seen by Cook. All these rivers are the principal drainage from the east side of the Dividing Range down to the sea. They have a short course, and run through one of the richest soils that Australia possesses.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE FLINDERS RANGE AND GIPPSLAND.

Eyre's exploration near Adelaide—The Flinders Range—The Broughton—The Rocky River—Mount Remarkable—Mount Eyre—Port Lincoln—Overland route to Mount Arden—Gawler Range—Baxter Range—Governor Gawler's explorations—Fate of Mr. Bryan—McMillan in Gippsland—Strzelecki in the Alps—Mount Kosciusko—Terrible journey overland to Western Port.

WE must now turn from the tropical regions of Australia to that small settlement on the south coast, which had begun round the slowly rising town of Adelaide. This colony has not been alluded to since the description of the few explorations following the first occupation of the colony. From that period very little had been done in the way of discovery, because the territory was known to a far greater distance than the wants of the colonists then extended. In 1839 the knowledge of the country was pretty extensive, but no large share of the discoveries fell to the lot of any single individual. Little excursions were continually undertaken by persons in search of good country, and these would always result in something new. Besides this, the Government surveyors were always adding to the map, until, little by little, and piece by piece, the country round Adelaide was known and described.

And yet there were reasons why no very important discoveries could take place without the equipment of a large exploring party. The general features of the colony were known, except in the north; and even in this direction, Flinders' discoveries at the head of Spencer's Gulf had shown what they might expect as far as Mount Arden—a distance of two hundred miles. To the south there was the sea; to the east, the

Darling and Murray, which had been explored; and to the west, the sea and Yorke's Peninsula, which had been a little explored by many parties, and some considerable patches of available country found amid its dense scrubs. To the north, about a hundred miles had been minutely examined, and several small streams, such as the Light, the Wakefield, and the Gilbert, discovered amid the mountains.* But it would take many years before the population would be sufficient to occupy all the land known, so that any exploring expedition must start from Adelaide, and, unless equipped for a long journey, could not carry an examination much beyond what was already explored.

Mr. Eyre was the first that roused public attention in Adelaide to the subject of geographical discovery. This is the same gentleman who discovered the Wimmera River, in 1839. He then occupied a small sheep station, about fifty-five miles north of Adelaide. In May of that year he started to explore the Flinders Range beyond Mount Arden, for he had very great hopes that it would be found to cross the continent. His journey was among the grassy undulating hills of the range, and for the first hundred miles he found them to be a chain of fertile valleys, well grassed and of exceedingly rich soil. Nothing could exceed the picturesque character of the hills. They were easy to travel over, and very lightly timbered for the most part. Whatever height their summits might be above the sea, the ascent was gradual, and extensive watercourses, such as the Hill and the Hutt Rivers, watered their principal slopes. Thirty miles beyond the Hutt, Eyre came upon a very wide stream named the Broughton. It was a

* In thus summarising the smaller discoveries about Adelaide I may possibly dissatisfy South Australians, who would naturally wish to see the finding of many little places mentioned, and the names of their daring pioneers preserved. I feel it necessary to offer one word of apology to the colony of my adoption. Many names and particulars are before me which I am reluctantly compelled to omit, for the sake of bringing these volumes within reasonable limits. There is one more reason. This work is intended for the general public, who cannot be supposed to care for an enumeration of places and persons which have not the slightest importance in connection with the gradual development of the geography of Australia.

chain of long, wide, and very deep water-holes, connected with one another by what appeared to be a running stream. The soil upon its banks was much poorer than what was found in the hills further south. But there was a grassy and picturesque range to the north, named Campbell's Range, which has several springs on it, and gives rise to a small stream which joined the Broughton lower down. As the watercourse approached the Broughton, the country became more abrupt and broken; and after its junction with that river, the stream wound through a succession of precipitous hills for about fifteen miles to the southward. Up to the point where it left the hills it had water in its bed, but after that the channel became dry and gravelly, amid open plains, with probably an underground drainage. This is the character of nearly every stream which runs from the Flinders Range, and indeed from nearly every other range in Australia, as will be seen from the discoveries of the next volume.

Eyre left the Broughton on a course slightly west of north, across a barren country. From the summit of a hill, named Spring Hill, extensive plains were visible to the north-west, with open rises on each side, while to the west he could see the waters of Spencer's Gulf. He crossed the plains, amid which a deep creek ran, which came through Campbell's Range, and thus opened a passage to the eastward. Beyond the creek the country was high and level; and, while travelling through it, Eyre suddenly found himself on the edge of a small gorge, through which a charming mountain stream, named the Rocky River, took its course. It was running, but, like the Broughton, when traced down, it was found to lose itself in a sandy channel. From this stream a conspicuous peaked hill was visible to the northward, which, from its abruptness, and the way it stood isolated from the neighbouring hills, was named Mount Remarkable.

The country round the Rocky River was open, but of inferior description, until Eyre left the ranges and travelled on the flat between them and Spencer's Gulf.

The inlet was not wide here, for the hills on the opposite side were distinctly visible. In moving up the gulf, along the range, its character seemed to vary but little for seventy or eighty miles. It rises abruptly from the plains like high, rocky, barren walls, and so generally even is the country at its base that a carriage might easily pass within a mile or two of it, were it not for the small watercourses which run occasionally down from the gorges at the sides. The rocks were abrupt escarpments of quartzite, or steep declivities of clay-slate. There was little or no vegetation on the hills.

Ten miles from Mount Arden, there was a hill standing out from the main range of considerable elevation, bold and rocky. Eyre immediately went towards it, and soon reached its summit. The views were not agreeable. The region to the north appeared to consist of low, rocky, sandy country, without trees or shrubs of any sort of growth, except a few stunted bushes. On the east the view was backed by high rugged ranges, very barren in appearance, and extending northward as far as the eye could reach. To the west and north-west appeared a broad glittering stripe, like a sheet of water. This was named Lake Torrens. It appeared about twenty-five miles off, and of considerable width, but at so great a distance it was impossible to say whether there was water in it. At any rate, it did not look an encouraging spot, and so Eyre turned from it. This was his furthest point, and when he returned to Adelaide, the Governor directed that the hill from which the lake was seen should be called Mount Eyre.

In the same year, Mr. Eyre undertook the command of another expedition, to examine the coast to the west of Port Lincoln, and, if circumstances allowed, to explore a portion of the inland country. There had been a small settlement established at the port, but it was then very recently founded, and though nothing was known of the back country, very small hopes were entertained of its fertility. Small or large, it was Eyre's lot to destroy them completely by his discoveries. At a very few miles from the town, he had to work his

way through a dense scrub until he reached the sea-shore. Immediately contiguous to this the country was a little better. It consisted of low, grassy, lightly timbered ridges of limestone, too stony to be fertile, and yet very picturesque in contrast with the scrubby land. Such ridges form a characteristic feature of a great deal of the south coast. The limestone is a recent shelly deposit, and generally contains springs and lakes of fresh water. Eyre found it the case here. He saw many lakes, of which some were fresh and some were salt, the latter with fresh-water springs bubbling up in their midst. The ridges seemed to extend about twelve miles inland, and there commenced a low, level waste of barren, scrubby land; but as they proceeded the range receded from the sea and left scrub on both sides, interrupted near the beach by large salt lakes. One of these had been seen by Flinders from the mast-head of the *Investigator*, when near Streaky Bay, and it had been mistaken for an inlet. The scrub inland had salt lakes too, with here and there granite ridges, rising like solitary signals amid the brown expanse of foliage.

When Eyre reached Streaky Bay, he determined to cross thence to Mount Arden, which would take him on a nearly east course along the top of the north part of the Port Lincoln Peninsula, and thus give him a good idea of the general character of the inland country. The first day's journey was through eighteen miles of alternating scrub and open plains, with grass, but no water, and certainly nothing approaching a fertile soil. Next day, fifteen miles more took him to a high granite ridge, with both grass and water upon its flanks. To the north-east, many peaks of a range were visible, with a high and broken outline; and this was named the Gawler Range, after the governor of the colony. It was for a long time hoped that it was the commencement of a fertile region further to the north, but Eyre was not able to examine it then. It was fortunate for his hopes that he did not, for recent explorations have shown it to be a worthless region, not differing from similar ranges on the tableland of Western Australia,

of which the reader will learn more than enough hereafter. From the granite ridge, Eyre's route was through a fearful desert, very scrubby and stony, with much spinifex (*Triodia irritans*) growing upon the sand ridges, which were interrupted by level limestone flats. In spite of the heaviness of the sand, they were enabled to travel, over twenty-five miles of such country, to a high ridge, not unlike their camp of the previous evening. The Gawler Range was now distinctly visible, extending from N. 15° W. to N. 65° E., and presenting the broken and picturesque outline of a vast mountain mass rising abruptly out of the low scrubby country. The principal elevation could not be less than two thousand feet, but the height seemed to decrease to the north-west.

The next day, twenty miles more of heavy sandy scrub brought them under the Gawler Range. They found the mountain to be of granite, with only coarse vegetation, and no water, except a few surface pools. From one of the summits, Eyre obtained a view over interminable scrub, with salt lakes, but nothing more encouraging, as far as he could see. The journey, for the two following days, was along the foot of the range. There was good grass in patches, but no water, until the evening of the second day. The rock, meanwhile, had changed to a reddish quartzite, and while the hills seemed to increase in elevation to the north, to the east they were becoming lower and quite detached.

From this point they travelled due east, finding a little surface-water, but no grass. But one other elevation was crossed, and that was named Banter's Range; but with this exception, and the occurrence of a few salt lakes, nothing interrupted the scrub until they reached the head of Spencer's Gulf. They had thus succeeded in forcing a passage; but at most seasons such a journey must be impracticable. The only water to be found is a small quantity in the holes in the rocks, left by the rain, so that, unless after wet weather, this barren, rocky, and worthless country cannot be penetrated.

In the same year, 1839, an attempt was made by

Governor Gawler to explore from the north-west head of the River Murray towards the east side of the Flinders Range. What little was known of the country lying between (about a hundred miles in a straight line), were not favourable. Wherever it had been penetrated it had been found to be a dense scrub; still it was imagined that it might alter were it explored sufficiently far, and this was what the governor was anxious to ascertain. His exploration led to no remarkable result, but it is chiefly memorable in connection with the unhappy fate of one of the gentlemen who assisted him.

He left the Murray in November, 1839, accompanied by Captain Sturt, Messrs. Inman and Bryan, and two attendants. Their journey at first was over plains of sand, covered with patches of stunted trees, with tall grass, some saltbush, and no water. What little they carried with them was exhausted on the day following, and it seemed certain that their exploration must terminate unless some supplies were reached. As none was found, the governor, with Mr. Bryan, went back to the camp in all haste to get some assistance for the others on their return, because the animals were much exhausted and could not travel fast. At twelve miles Mr. Bryan was too fatigued to go further, and Governor Gawler was reluctantly obliged to leave him and go on alone for assistance. He reached the camp, and went back with water, but Bryan was not to be found in the place where he had been left. By the time the rest of the party came up a regular search was made. He was never found. His coat was discovered, with a paper, on which was written that he was much exhausted and had gone to the south-east, but no further traces could be seen, though the search was continued until the provisions were exhausted.

Thus the South Australian colony was gradually becoming better known, and there remained but little within the limits of the other colonies which was not explored. There was, however, one important exception, and that not a very great distance from Melbourne. This was the territory of Gippsland, which has since

proved one of the most fertile and extensive districts in that colony. Though not very far from Melbourne, it was separated from it by ranges, and dense thickets and scrubs, which acted as a very effectual bar to explorers, who had so much fine open territory to the north and westward still to investigate.

The country referred to lies between Wilson's Promontory and Cape Howe. It is a sort of crescent, hemmed in between the sea and the Australian Alps. The latter chain, which makes many bends to the westward in its southerly part, makes a more direct course to the sea about the 147th meridian. Here the hills become lower and more rounded and fertile. The spurs are less abrupt, shaping the intermediate valleys into most picturesque slopes, until they finally terminate in an open plain as rich and luxuriant as any in Australia.

"Viewed from Mount Gisborne, Gippsland resembles," says Count Strzelecki, "a subterranean amphitheatre, walled from north-east to south-west by lofty and picturesque mountain scenery, and open towards the south-east, where it faces, with its sloping area, the uninterrupted horizon of the sea."

It may perhaps be astonishing, that so extensive and promising a tract had remained unexplored. Unknown it certainly was not, for Cook saw it, and so did every voyager who came near enough to the coast. In the passage through Bass's Straits, Bass saw it; and there was scarcely a squatter on the north side of the Dividing Range who was not aware that some good and available country existed upon the south side, could a passage be found to it.* But it is easy to understand why it was not explored. The coast was an almost inaccessible sandy beach, and on the inland side the country was surrounded by mountains of an impenetrable roughness.

However, in 1840, the land was destined to have

* In an article in the "Edinburgh Review," published in 1862, on the subject of Australian exploration, it is stated that Count Strzelecki discovered the available tract of Gippsland, the previous existence of which was not even suspected. There are two inaccuracies in this assertion, which will be seen from what follows in this chapter.

its solitude disturbed. The discovery was made by a Mr. McMillan, who was overseer on a station near the Snowy Mountains. On the 11th January, 1840, he started from the station where he was living, accompanied by Messrs. Cameron and Mathew, one stockman, and a black fellow. They spent the first day and the second amid the Snowy Mountains; and having passed the range, travelled along a river, with large and extensive flats on both sides, and backed by beautiful open forests. On the 14th, they were only thirty miles from their starting-point, and yet came next day to a large fresh-water lake, into which the river emptied itself. The country was improving at every step, and was now a large plain of very fertile, well-grassed land. Thus far their course had been south, but now the creeks from the lake were so numerous that they changed to the westward. This brought them to another huge river, not then less than thirty yards broad and twelve feet deep. It was impossible to cross it, as the banks were very boggy, so, very much to their regret, they were obliged to leave the fine plains, and make again towards the rugged ranges, in order to head the stream. They soon, however, resumed their course to the south, and another river was crossed, with splendid land upon its banks, quite fit for cultivation. They forded the stream near the ranges, and even then only with considerable difficulty. Every stream they crossed they tried to make to the southward, but were always obliged to return to the mountains to head the watercourses which succeeded. The last river they met with was the finest of all, and a beautiful broad and rapid stream. They followed it for a few miles to the south-west, until the channel led into a morass at the back of the coast range. This seemed to extend from the lake, and was at least a mile broad. They made several ineffectual attempts to cross it, but were obliged at last to give up their hopes of reaching the sea in that direction. Mr. McMillan now proposed that they should go up the river to the northward, and cross it thus, but this was impossible. Their provisions, which

were only intended for fourteen days, were now exhausted, with the exception of ten pounds of flour and a small damper. They were therefore obliged reluctantly to turn back, without seeing the coast.

McMillan imagined that he was only twenty-five miles from Wilson's Promontory when he returned; but this was a mistake, for he must have been at least sixty miles from it, and therefore it was fortunate for him, perhaps, that he did not attempt to push further. The party saw many natives on their journey, but they always burnt their camps and fled on seeing the explorers. In giving this account of the discoveries of McMillan, I have purposely refrained from mentioning the names given by him to the rivers, as they were afterwards superseded by those bestowed on them by Count Strzelecki, whose party met McMillan on the mountains, as he returned from his expedition. The Count had already seen the territory from the range, and was about to explore it when he encountered McMillan. The latter told his discoveries, and sent back his stockman to point out the track. When McMillan returned, he said as little as possible about his discoveries in order to gain time to stock the portion of the country which he required for squatting purposes. When Count Strzelecki returned, he had no such motive for secresy, and therefore immediately made known the character of the beautiful country he had seen. It has never been explained why he thus assumed the whole merit of discoveries which he developed in an important degree, but certainly did not initiate.

The Count's party made some very important explorations in its journey. The general objects of the expedition were to determine the course of the range dividing the eastern and western waters, as well as to complete a geognostic survey of the country in which the Count had been for a long time engaged. The party consisted of the leader, with Messrs. McArthur and Riley, with servants, &c. They began by following up the valley of the Murray for seventy miles, until they arrived at the foot of the highest peaks of the

Australian Alps. An ascent was immediately commenced; at noon, on the 15th February, they were on the summit, amid those snows whose dazzling pinnacles had so enraptured Messrs. Hovell and Hume fifteen years previously. The view was most beautiful; above was the dark-blue sky, and all around were the rugged peaks, looking smooth, and gently swelling with their snow drapery; and underneath, seven thousand square miles of diversified plains, amid which the silvery windings of the Tumut, the Murrumbidgee, and the Murray could be traced. The elevation from which the view was obtained was named Mount Kosciusko, in consequence of the resemblance which it bore to a tumulus erected over the remains of the patriot at Cracow.

From the summit of the mount, the party retraced their steps to the source of the Conway Creek, pursuing a route which finally led them to Lake Omeo. This is a mountain basin, like Lakes George and Bathurst, but much smaller, and the water scanty. The country around was rich and fertile, and communication was traced between it and the valley of the Murray, which was a splendid slope of the finest pasture. On entering Gippsland from this, the Count and his party crossed a beautiful stream, whose source was already occupied by the cattle station of Messrs. Butler and McAlister. The channel, though narrow at first, soon swelled out into a large river. Ascending a ridge to the southward, the Count obtained a splendid view of the sea upon the south-east horizon, with a fine undulating country in the foreground. The river was found, after a course of seventy miles, to empty itself into a lagoon which joined the extensive lake already discovered by McMillan. A south-eastern course led them to the second and third lagoon, the lake, three hundred yards in width, spreading its waters in a river-like form, until it finally terminated in a river, about twenty yards in width. This river ran from the high north-easterly spurs of the Dividing Range, and its banks were steep and hilly. It was called the Thompson, and the lake, Lake King.

After crossing the Thompson, they found a rich undulating country, sloping away to the south, with other rivers, named the Riley and McArthur. After this, no difficulties whatever were found in travelling to the sea, towards which they advanced for some days. Thirty-five miles from the McAlister, was a fourth river (the Perry); twelve miles beyond, a fifth (the Dunlop); and four miles further a sixth, (the Barney); but none of these were more than mountain streams, and they all joined before reaching the coast. Two fine wide plains lay upon the further side of the Barney, and the scenery in the neighbourhood was, according to the Count, the finest in Gippsland. To the north were the Alps, with their snowy summits, looking like sharp white clouds resting on the rugged hills; to the west was an undulating country of hill and valley, and plain, while far away in the south-east the first elevation of the coast range was dimly visible.

Beyond the plains the explorers travelled through twenty miles of open forest land. It was like a plain at first, but gradually narrowed into an open valley, as the coast range and the Dividing Range approached each other. The spurs of the ridge soon intercepted the direct course, being succeeded by a thick scrub fringing another river close by. At this point it became necessary to change the course to about north-west, and after two days a crossing-place was found considerably higher up the river. The stream was called the Maconochie. Fourteen miles further, in the direction towards Corner Inlet, brought them to an eighth river, larger than any they had hitherto met; it was called La Trobe. Like all the preceding ones, it discharged itself into a lake which was subsequently discovered. The aspect of the country, Count Strzelecki observed, varied in this portion of Gippsland. The river Machonochie was almost a boundary between the valleys and the hilly ground to the south-west and the undulating forest extending to the north-east. On the river La Trobe rich plains were no more to be seen, but in their place were wide and deep valleys

to the north-west, and hilly ranges to the south, interspersed with innumerable creeks clothed with exuberant vegetation. From a neighbouring hill a view of the whole country was obtained, including the Dividing Range as far as Wilson's Promontory; and all was of that pleasing aspect which had greeted the explorers on their first entrance into Gippsland.

After leaving the river La Trobe, the course to Corner Inlet was resumed; but the utter exhaustion of the horses began seriously to impede the progress of the party, and in a few days it was found necessary to abandon them. All those engaged in the expedition had been for five weeks on an allowance of one biscuit and a slice of bacon per day; and even at this rate, the remainder of the provisions would only last four days. With great regret, the Count was forced to abandon his project of tracing the main range down to Wilson's Promontory, but the state of the party made it imperative that he should reach Western Port as soon as possible. The route now commenced led for twenty-four days through a scrubby country, covered with the finest blue gum and stringy bark; but the scrub in places was almost impenetrable, especially to the explorers, who were so much weakened by starvation. On some days the advance would only be a mile or so, and even in this distance every foot of the way had to be cut through. The Count was indefatigable. Very often he made a path by throwing himself bodily upon the bushes, and thus breaking an opening by the weight of his muscular frame. They were soon entirely out of provisions, but found a sort of substitute by living on the native bear (*Phascolarctus cinereus*), which was plentiful even in the forests. Happily, both the ascent and descent of the Dividing Range in the direction of Western Port was gradual. A few lateral spurs were the only other difficulties of the kind encountered, and they at last reached Western Port in a most exhausted condition, the lives of all being, no doubt, preserved by the energy and perseverance of their leader.

With these discoveries we terminate the first epoch

of Australian discovery. The state of knowledge with regard to the colonies themselves could not be carried much further. All that could be known about Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, and Perth was finally ascertained, and exploring operations were now free to solve the mystery of the interior. How rapid has been the advance of knowledge since then, the succeeding volume will show; and if it bids farewell to the fertility and richness of pastoral scenery near the coast, it can give in exchange more romantic adventures, and a history of more devoted energy in prosecuting the cause that we have had to record in the foregoing pages.

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